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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA.

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BY

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CHAPTER XII.

It is now necessary to return to the affairs of Bengal, for the purpose of adverting to some important acts of Hastings's government not hitherto noticed.

During the war waged with Meer Cossim and the Vizier of Oude, the English had received some support from the Rajah of Benares, named Bulwunt Singh. His conduct had been sometimes regarded with suspicion; but, on the whole, it had afforded so much satisfaction, that it was deemed right to secure his peaceful possession of the country which he administered by a special provision in the treaty concluded with the vizier. On the death of Bulwunt Singh, the British government again interfered to procure a continuance of the zemindary to his son, Cheyt Singh, and this object was effected, the young rajah being subjected to the charge of a considerable present to the vizier, and a small increase of his annual tribute. On these conditions, the vizier granted sunnuds confirming Cheyt Singh in the rights exercised by his father. Subsequently, by virtue of a treaty concluded between the East-India Company and Azoff-al-Dowlah, the territories administered by Cheyt Singh passed into the hands of the

CHAP. XII. former authority.* New sunnuds were granted to Cheyt Singh by the British government, confirming him in the exercise of the powers and rights which he had previously held under the Soubahdar of Oude, subject to the payment of the same amount of tribute, and to an additional sum of about ninety thousand rupees levied under the title of nuzzerana.

When the war with France rendered it necessary for the Company's government to make additional preparations for defence, it was determined to call upon Cheyt Sing to contribute to the object, and he was required to consent to the establishment of three battalions of sepoys, to be raised and maintained at his expense. The rajah did not object, and his vakeel at Calcutta proposed that the amount of the annual charge should be fixed at three lacs of rupees. This was deemed insufficient by the British authorities, who determined that the sum of five lacs was not excessive, and required that it should be paid without delay. The rajah, in conformity with the usual practice of oriental debtors, endeavoured to procrastinate, and the English resident was directed to assume a threatening tone; but, ultimately, that sum was paid as the first year's subsidy.

The second year brought a fresh demand from the British government, and fresh evasions on the part of the rajah. After many attempts to elude payment altogether, he furnished part of the required sum, but declared himself unable to complete it.

* See page 66.

His inability was not removed until two battalions had been put in motion against him. He then paid the balance of the subsidy, as well as the military expenses incurred by his resistance. The proceedings of the third year differed little from those of the second. After the ordinary delays, a military force was ordered to advance, but the timely submission of the rajah rendered their presence unnecessary. In addition to the subsidy, the British government now demanded from Cheyt Singh the assistance of a body of cavalry, to be continued during the war. The rajah did not comply, and fresh cause of irritation was thus created. Shortly afterwards the time arrived for demanding the fourth year's subsidy. It was reported and believed, that the rajah had inherited great wealth from his father, which he had secured in two strong fortresses, and to which he continued to make yearly additions. To these accumulations the eye of the governor-general was directed for a twofold purpose. He deemed the conduct of the rajah contumacious and disaffected, and on these grounds deserving of punishment. The punishment of the rajah might conveniently be combined with the relief of the necessities of the British government by the infliction of a large pecuniary fine; and this plan he resolved to adopt. Having secured the consent of his coadjutors, he departed on a journey to Benares. At Buxar he was met by Cheyt Singh, with a large fleet of boats. Several interviews took place between the governor-general and the rajah, at one of which

CHAP. XII. the latter placed his turban on Hastings's lap. The governor-general, however, continued to prosecute his journey to Benares, at which place he arrived on
A.D. 1781. the 14th of August. Here he declined personal conference with the rajah, but dispatched a letter to him, stating at length the grounds of the dissatisfaction of the British government, and requiring an answer. The answer, as must have been expected, was unsatisfactory, and Hastings chose to regard it as offensive. His next measure was a strong one. He ordered the British resident, Mr. Markham, to proceed to the house of the rajah, and put him under arrest. The resident executed the order without difficulty, the rajah calmly submitting.

While the governor-general was preparing to carry out the design to which the seizure of the rajah's person was preliminary, he was informed that large bodies of armed men had arrived from Ramnaghur, and had proceeded to the rajah's house. The guard placed over the rajah consisted of two companies of grenadier sepoys, who were stationed in an enclosed square which surrounded the rajah's apartments. By some extraordinary neglect these troops had been sent without ammunition. To supply the want, another company of sepoys was subsequently dispatched, but on their arrival they found their passage disputed by a multitude of armed men, who had surrounded the house and blockaded all the avenues. The British party were thus unable to advance to the succour of the troops in the square, who were attacked by the rajah's men, and, being

unprovided with the means of resistance, were speedily cut to pieces. In the confusion, the rajah left the house by a wicket which opened to the river, and by means of turbans tied together, descended the steep bank to a boat, which was waiting to convey him to the opposite shore. Those to whom he owed his escape followed him; and the company of British sepoys, who had arrived too late to aid their companions, took possession of the place where they had been slaughtered. The departure of Cheyt Singh's men in the train of their master delivered the governor-general and his attendants from apprehensions which it was by no means unreasonable to entertain. Had they proceeded to the governor-general's quarters, he, and every Englishman with him, must have fallen an easy prey. This catastrophe was averted, and the escape is probably to be attributed to the irregularity and disorder which marked the entire proceedings ending in the rescue of the rajah.

Hastings now found himself involved unexpectedly in actual warfare. An attack was planned upon Ramnaghur, one of the principal strongholds of the rajah. This failed through the perversity of the commander of a detachment, who, by a premature and ill-judged movement, brought his party into a situation where, in the language of Hastings, they were "annihilated rather than defeated." In the mean time Hastings became alarmed for his own position, which there was reason to believe was intended to be attacked. The opinion of a council of

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officers coincided with that of the governor-general, that retreat was desirable, and the party in consequence moved to Chunarghur. The rajah continued to solicit peace, but Hastings did not condescend even to answer his communications.

At Chunarghur, however, he continued to be dreadfully distressed for money and provisions. Supplies and reinforcements at length arrived, and after some minor successes, it was resolved to attack the fortresses of Cheyt Singh. Pateeta was taken by Major Popham by storm; and on the same day Major Crabb defeated a party who endeavoured to intercept his advance to the pass of Sackroot, on which an attempt was to be made simultaneously with the attack on Pateeta.

Cheyt Singh had not expected that the English would venture to attack him, and the concurrent success of Major Popham and Major Crabb filled him with alarm. He fled in the direction of Bidzeghur, where a principal part of his treasure was deposited, and thither he was pursued by Major Popham. In the mean time the governor-general returned to Benares, to make arrangements for the administration of the country, a duty which it was declared Cheyt Singh had forfeited the right to perform. The zemindary was bestowed on the son of a daughter of Bulwunt Singh. His age was nineteen, and it might have been presumed that he would have been held competent to exercise the duties of his office in person. But from some cause which does not appear, this did not meet the views

of the governor-general, and the actual management of the country was committed to the father of the new zemindar, under the title of Naib. Contemporary with these arrangements, the annual payment from the zemindar to the Company was considerably raised.

Major Popham advanced towards Bidzeghur, and on his approach Cheyt Singh withdrew, taking with him as much wealth as he could secure. His wife and mother remained, and in their names the fortress was defended with considerable resolution. A surrender was proposed, on condition of securing to the widow of Bulwunt Singh the possession of her property and the administration of a specified pergunnah. The latter condition was obviously objectionable; and as the Ranee claimed all the property within the place, alleging that her son had carried away all that belonged to him, compliance with the former would have left the captors nothing but the barren possession of the fortress. The conditions were accordingly refused, under the orders of the governor-general, and the place finally surrendered on the single stipulation of personal protection to the prisoners. Some treasure, though far less than was expected, was found within the fortress; but no part of it was destined to recruit the Company's exhausted treasury. It was seized and appropriated by the military as prize. Major Popham, it is said, was not disposed to approve of this act, but he was overawed by the clamour of his officers. This was a serious disappointment to Hastings. He had calcu-

CHAP. XII. lated on raising a large sum by way of fine on Cheyt Singh—the resistance offered on behalf of the zemindar had rendered it necessary to incur expense in military operations, and when a portion of treasure was secured, it was diverted to private benefit, the finances of government being burdened instead of relieved by the operations in Benares. Foiled in the principal object of his visit to Benares, the governor-general sought to obtain an advance from the officers by way of loan for the use of government; but those who had so promptly seized the spoil were too careful to place any part of it in danger.

Bidzeghur was not taken by assault, and it may appear difficult to determine the grounds upon which the appropriation of the treasure took place. The main one probably was, that those who made it had the power of advancing their own interests, with very slight chance of an after-reckoning—and that at a very remote period of time, if it should ever occur. It was alleged, too, that the extraordinary despatch manifested on this occasion was caused by a disappointment to which the officers had been subjected with regard to prize-money in the Rohilla war. Another ground of justification was the presumed authority of Hastings himself. When the proposal to surrender Bidzeghur, on conditions, was communicated by Major Popham to the governor-general, the latter answered in a manner which it is difficult to reconcile with the object of the proceedings against Cheyt Singh. "With respect to the booty," he said, "this is rather your consideration than

mine. I should be very sorry that your officers and soldiers lost any part of the reward to which they are so well entitled." That such language should have been held under such circumstances would be incredible, were the fact not attested in a manner that leaves it beyond dispute. It remains then to find, if possible, a solution of the difficulty. Did Hastings really intend that the army should enjoy the treasure found in Bidzeghur? "It seems," as has justly been said, "ridiculous in the extreme to suppose, that the head and representative of a government, which stood upon the brink of bankruptcy, should have meditated a proceeding so suicidal."* Did the governor-general then express himself hastily and unguardedly? At such a time—on such a subject—in answer to a reference of such weighty importance, it is impossible to believe this. There is one other mode of accounting for Hastings's language—it is by ascribing it to a desire to stimulate the zeal of the military employed before Bidzeghur by the prospect of reward, of which, at a future time, Hastings could determine the amount, and even adjudicate on the validity of the claim. Unfortunately, Hastings's character for candour does not stand sufficiently high to ensure the rejection of this supposition.

The conduct of Hastings, with regard to Cheyt Singh, drew upon him abundant and severe censure, and it furnished part of the matter of his subsequent impeachment. In judging of it, the first

* Gleig's Memoirs of Hastings, vol. ii. page 417.

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point for consideration is, the justice of demanding from Cheyt Singh any contribution towards the service of the English government beyond the rent or tribute secured by the original contract between the parties. Both sides of the question may be supported by plausible arguments. On the one hand, it has been alleged that, if such a demand were allowable, a person in the situation of Cheyt Singh would possess no security for the enjoyment of any part of the property which he held under the solemn recognition of a superior authority—that if five lacs of rupees might be demanded under extraordinary circumstances, so might fifty, and that thus the entire profits of the dependant might be alienated to the chief. This, however, is an argument resting for its validity upon a presumed abuse of power. In the same manner, the right of any government to tax its subjects might be questioned, because this right may be exercised to the purposes of oppression and ruin. If any right existed in the government of Bengal to demand extraordinary aid from the rajah of Benares, it must be taken with the correlative obligation of exercising it with reason and with a due regard to the rajah's ability. The supreme authority in every state has a right to raise money for the public service, and to restrain crime by punishment; but it would be an abuse of language to say that any power can have a right to levy undue exactions or to inflict unjust punishment.

In support of the claim of the Bengal govern-

ment, it may be argued, that the annual contribution rendered by Cheyt Singh could be regarded as a complete satisfaction of the claims of the state of which he was a dependant only in ordinary times. The British government were involved in expensive wars: on what ground could any portion of the British territories in India claim to be exempted from the burden of contributing to the expenses occasioned by those wars? The districts governed by Cheyt Singh were clearly British territory—they had been formally ceded to the Company by the vizier. It is quite certain that, if that prince had retained them, he would have felt little delicacy in requiring, in case of emergency, extraordinary assistance from the rajah of Benares to the extent of his ability, or something beyond it. The English took the same rights which had been exercised by the vizier, and their sovereignty was asserted by the grant of fresh sunnuds to the rajah, and recognised by his acceptance of them. As a subject, for such in truth he was, it was his duty to contribute to the general defence of the state. Hastings called upon him so to contribute, and notwithstanding the obloquy which he thereby incurred, at a time when men seemed incapable of bringing to the discussion of questions of Indian policy any portion of the calmness essential to the discovery of truth, it appears probable that the cooler judgment of posterity will not regard this as among the reprehensible acts of Hastings's administration. If the right to require assistance be conceded, the amount demanded does not

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appear unreasonable; and though Cheyt Singh complained bitterly, his complaints may fairly be ascribed to the ordinary habit of the East, of postponing to the latest moment all payments, however just or reasonable, and, if possible, of evading them altogether.

In regard to the demand for cavalry, the conduct of the rajah was of a similar character, and can scarcely be ascribed to any cause but a disaffection to the British government. It had been recommended that he should constantly keep two thousand cavalry, but this was not obligatory. What number he actually had it is not possible to ascertain, but it is certain that he had some; and though, after many evasions, he offered to furnish a few, he contented himself with merely offering—he sent none. That such conduct should excite indignation is not surprising; and reference being had to the relation in which the rajah stood to the British government, it would be difficult to shew the injustice of visiting his contumacy with a reasonable pecuniary fine. Hastings had resolved to inflict a very large one; his views extended to forty or fifty lacs of rupees: an amount certainly disproportioned to the rajah's offences, and the payment of which must, in all probability, have totally impoverished him. It cannot be questioned that, in determining the amount, the governor-general appears to have been influenced far more by a regard to the interests of the Company's treasury than to the just apportionment of merited punishment.

In the measures taken towards the enforcement of this claim, Hastings, too, seems to have acted with undue violence. His course was probably dictated by the extravagant amount of the demand which he had determined to make: it must have been quite certain that the rajah would not yield without force, and Hastings went to Benares prepared to have recourse to that last resort for the settlement of differences. He contemplated either the deprivation of Cheyt Singh of his zemindary, or the seizure of the forts in which the rajah's treasure was deposited, with a view to the forcible appropriation of a sufficient portion to meet the fine. The preliminary step was, as has been seen, to place Cheyt Singh in arrest. In any part of the world such a proceeding would, under the circumstances, have been thought harsh and oppressive. In India, the subjection of the person of a man of rank to restraint, is felt as an indignity of the grossest character. It provoked resistance; and had the advantage gained by the rajah's party been improved, the governor-general and Cheyt Singh might have changed places. The want of spirit, or the want of judgment, in the rajah's supporters, saved Hastings from captivity or from death, and secured him the means of inflicting vengeance on his enemy. That vengeance was both summary and complete; but this was all that the governor-general gained by his visit to Benares. The treasure which he had anticipated was diverted from public to private purposes by the men who were the instruments for executing Hast-

CHAP. XII. ings's plans, and the main object of those plans was thus frustrated.

The spirit which Hastings manifested towards Cheyt Singh was so intensely bitter, as almost to force an inquiry whether the public delinquency of this man could be the sole cause of the governor-general's hatred. This is a question which could not have been satisfactorily answered had not Hastings himself afforded the means. In enumerating the crimes of the rajah, Hastings accuses him of having entertained an intention to revolt. "This design," says he, "had been greatly favoured by the unhappy divisions of our government, in which he presumed to take an open part. It is a fact, that when these had proceeded to an extremity bordering on civil violence, by an attempt to wrest from me my authority, in the month of June, 1777, he had deputed a man named Sumboonaut, with an express commission to my opponent, and the man had proceeded as far as Moorshedabad, when, hearing of the change of affairs which had taken place at the presidency, he stopped, and the rajah recalled him."* Here, then, is the key, furnished by Hastings himself, to the feelings under which he carried on his proceedings against Cheyt Singh. While the contest between himself and General Clavering was raging,

* Hastings's Narrative, printed in the Appendix to the Supplement to the Second Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Administration of Justice in India, 1782; and also in the Minutes of Evidence on the Trial of Hastings, vol. i.

the presumptuous rajah had ventured to dispatch a messenger to the opponent of the man who was eventually to be master of his fortunes. For four years the hatred engendered by this act had burned in Hastings's heart, when an opportunity occurred for gratifying at once the claims of public justice and of private revenge. Such an opportunity Hastings was not the man to pass by. It is not necessary to ascribe the whole of his proceedings with regard to Cheyt Singh to personal hatred. Independently of this feeling, he would probably have called upon the rajah for assistance towards carrying on the war, and he would have been justified; he would probably have visited his numerous failures with some punishment; and in this, too, he would have been justified: but in the absence of the dark passion which had so long rankled in his breast, he would have proceeded with more calmness, more dignity, and more regard to the courtesy which the rank and position of the zemindar demanded. To humble to the dust the man who had offended him was a triumph which it was not in the nature of Hastings to forego, when circumstances threw in his way the opportunity of enjoying it. He set his foot on the neck of his enemy, and was happy.

With the explanation afforded by himself, the conduct of Hastings towards Cheyt Singh appears perfectly in accordance with his general character; but the indiscreet revelation of his feelings is remarkable, as being in striking opposition to that character. Disguise seemed to be natural to him.

CHAP. XII. On all occasions he surrounded himself and his motives with mystery. Here is a striking exception. A degree of frankness, which few men in such a case would have manifested, for once marks a communication from Warren Hastings. How is this to be accounted for? By the strength of the passion which had waited years for gratification, and by the overwhelming sensation of triumph consequent on gratification when attained. Powerful must these feelings have been to overcome the caution of a man with whom concealment was not so much a habit as an instinct; which could induce him for once to lift the veil which on no other occasion was ever removed; which could lead him, unabashed and undismayed, to expose to the public eye motives and feelings of which the suggestions of the most ordinary prudence would have dictated the concealment —and this, too, at a time when, under the avowed consciousness that some parts of his proceedings required explanation, and under the humiliating sense of disappointment at the failure of his financial speculations, he was seeking to disarm hostility by apology!

In carrying on the review of Hastings's conduct through the remarkable transactions in Benares, it is pleasing to be able to pass from one portion of it, which certainly reflects no honour on him, to another, where it would be a breach of justice to withhold the meed of praise. For a time Hastings was in imminent danger, and no man under such circumstances could have displayed greater intrepidity.

His attention was never diverted from public business to personal safety; and surrounded by sources of alarm, he continued, as far as was practicable, to carry on the correspondence of government, not only with regard to the affairs of Benares, but to distant objects —to the negotiations with the Mahrattas and other important affairs. He could not fail to be anxious, even on public grounds, to be relieved from his perilous position; but the consciousness of it neither distracted his thoughts nor impaired his judgment. When at Chunarghur, in hourly expectation of an attack from the enemy, he seems to have discharged his duties with as much coolness and self-possession as if he had been in the council-room at Calcutta. This trait of character has been thought to merit some especial notice, inasmuch as Hastings had not enjoyed the advantage of a military education. Much of the calmness displayed by military men, under circumstances calculated to excite or distract the mind, is, without doubt, to be attributed to the effects of habit and discipline. Hastings seems to have inherited from nature this valuable gift, and at no part of his life did he manifest it more eminently than when surrounded by the difficulties in which his visit to Benares had involved him. CHAP. XII.

The punishment of the zemindar of Benares was not the only, nor indeed the principal, object of Hastings's visit in that quarter. He was to proceed from thence to Oude, the affairs of which country were in a most distracted state. The vizier had pro-

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posed to meet Hastings at Benares; but the unexpected occurrences which had taken place rendered Hastings reluctant to receive him there, and a letter was dispatched to the vizier dissuading his advance. The vizier, however, persisted in coming to meet the governor-general, who had thus no resource but to receive him with a good grace. The result of the visit was the conclusion of a new treaty between the Company's government and the vizier. Before noticing its provisions, it will be proper to advert to a fact connected with the negotiation, not in itself very remarkable, but rendered of importance by the extraordinary conduct of Hastings in relation to it. In the East, presents are indispensable auxiliaries of negotiation, and at the period under review the natives had little reason to expect that European diplomatists would manifest any objection to conforming in this respect to the custom of the country. The vizier was in a state of the greatest pecuniary embarrassment, but this did not prevent an offer to the governor-general of a sum amounting to ten lacs of rupees, as a private present. Hastings took the money, and applied it to the public service. Thus far, therefore, he may be thought not deserving of great blame, although it cannot be denied that, for his own honour and that of his country, it would have been far better that he should have refused to accept of any thing offered as a private advantage to himself, and which the donor could not fail to believe was to be so applied. This was, indeed, not the first transaction

of the kind in which he had been involved. On one occasion Cheyt Singh had tendered a small sum, as a private mark of his respect for the governor-general, which was accepted. This, too, was applied to public purposes; but, at the same time, it afforded opportunity for the employment of a series of disguises and misrepresentations on the part of Hastings, for which, as the money was employed properly, though obtained dishonourably, it is difficult to find a motive, except in the governor-general's unconquerable love of mystery.

Hastings has been accused of intending to appropriate it to himself, but the evidence does not sustain the charge. The gift of the vizier, however, he certainly destined to his personal benefit, and, in this instance, he entered on the purpose which he had in view in a manner far more direct than was usual with him. He did not advise the Court of Directors of the transaction until four months after it had taken place. A part of the sum only had then been paid, for the vizier's treasury did not overflow with money: for the remainder, bills had been given, the amount of which was eventually realized, though tardily, and with difficulty. Having stated the fact to the Court, and promised to render a faithful account, Hastings, without any preparation, or the suggestion of any reasons in support of the request, coolly added, "If you shall adjudge the deposit to me, I shall consider it the most honourable approbation and reward of my labours, and I wish to owe my fortune to your bounty." The gift

CHAP. XII. of a hundred thousand pounds has not often been asked with so little ceremony.* The application was not complied with.

* The recently published memoirs of Hastings contain a letter addressed by the governor-general to Major Scott, his agent in England, enclosing a copy of that which he had dispatched to the Court of Directors, claiming the personal benefit of the vizier's bounty. In this letter Hastings says, "I am neither a prude nor a hypocrite. Had I succeeded as I had reason to expect in the original objects of my expedition, I should have thought it, perhaps, allowable to make some provision for myself when I had filled the Company's treasury; but I am disappointed. I have added, indeed, a large income to the Company's revenue, and if Mr. Middleton [resident at Lucknow] does his duty, I have provided for the early payment of the debt due from the Nabob Vizier to the Company. But these are not acquisitions of *éclat*. Their immediate influence is not felt, and will not be known at all till long after the receipt of these dispatches. It will be known that our receipts from Benares were suspended for three months, and during as long a time at Lucknow. It will be known that the pay and charges of the temporary brigade have been thrown upon the Company, and that all the Nabob's pensioners have been withdrawn; but the effect of my more useful arrangement, thanks to Mr. Middleton, yet remains to be accomplished. I return to an empty treasury, which I left empty. I will not suffer it to be said, that I took more care of my own interests than of the public, nor that I made a sacrifice of the latter to the former."—Vol. ii., page 458. It is difficult to understand the boast with which the passage just quoted concludes. In asking for a present of a hundred thousand pounds, Hastings had certainly manifested some regard to his own interests, and, as he states that the public treasury was empty, the time chosen for preferring the request appears, to say the least, injudicious. It is equally difficult to understand what he means by saying, that if he had "succeeded as he had reason to expect," he "should have thought it, perhaps, allowable to make some provision for himself, when he had filled the Company's treasury." How would he have made it? Did he mean, that success would have justified him in accepting pre-

The visit of the vizier to Hastings was, however, productive of more important results than the trans-

sents, and applying them to his private use? He knew that this was unlawful. He could not mean, that with better success he would have asked something from the gratitude of the Court of Directors, for he had done this under the circumstances which he deplores. Had he succeeded better, he perhaps would have asked more; and if this be his meaning, it might be a curious matter of speculation to consider how much more. If he thought a hundred thousand pounds a reasonable remuneration of partial failure, how much would he have claimed as the reward of complete success?

The passage above quoted from the letter to Major Scott forms a curious subject of comparison with the following, which is to be found in Hastings' Narrative of his proceedings at Benares. "Possibly it may be suspected—and may God forgive those who know me and countenance the suspicion—I have no title to an exemption from it with others, that I was influenced by a secret and mercenary interest." The particular mode of promoting such interest from which Hastings proceeds to vindicate himself—that of holding out threats to extort some private advantage, without reference to public interests, is not chargeable upon him; but as it appears, from his own testimony, that had he not met with disappointments, one of those disappointments being undoubtedly the failure to secure the treasures of Cheyt Singh, he might have sought "some provision for himself,"—some provision, it must be presumed, of larger amount than a hundred thousand pounds, the disclaimer of all mercenary interest might have been made with less energy, and the solemn invocation of the Deity have been spared.

Hastings felt that his application for the allotment of the ten lacs to himself was not likely to pass as an ordinary request, which being granted or refused, the matter would be at an end. He commences the letter to Major Scott, already quoted, by saying, "I have written a letter to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, which will be thought extraordinary; indiscreet by my friends, and presumptuous by my enemies;—at least they will affect to think so:" and, in contemplation of a refusal, he concludes by saying, "only prevent, if you can, the refusal

CHAP. XII. fer of ten lacs of rupees from that prince to the Company, or their governor-general. A new treaty

being accompanied by abuse." Conscious that his application was not likely to find favour, either with friends or foes—anticipating that its refusal might be accompanied by abuse, it seems strange that he should have preferred it. Why the passion of the governor-general for a fortune should, at this particular time, have raged with more than fever heat; why the rupees of the Vizier of Oude should thus, beyond all other rupees, have captivated his love; why his desire to appropriate them should have been so violent as to break down all the mounds of caution and concealment within which he usually intrenched himself, no one seems to have been able to conjecture. But, if his prudence failed him, his sagacity was not at fault. Precisely those results which he predicted followed. By his enemies the request was regarded as "presumptuous;" by his friends as "indiscreet." His biographer, after relating the offer of the vizier, and its acceptance by Hastings, thus continues: "but he committed, at the same time, the only act, throughout the whole of his political career, of which it is impossible to deny that it was, at least, injudicious. He communicated to the Court of Directors the fact of the present having been made, and while he set forth his mode of applying it to the public service, he hazarded a request that, by the court, it might be given back, as a token of their approval of his conduct. What can I say about this? It was clearly not the act of a dishonest man, for such a one would have pocketed the money without so much as alluding to it in his communications with the India House. It was not the act of a mercenary man, for Hastings's character was the reverse of mercenary. It could not be the result of weakness, for of weakness no one will accuse him. And what is more extraordinary still, it was a proceeding of which, almost to his dying day, he used to speak as if there could be but one opinion respecting both the justice of the claim and the hardship of having it rejected. I am inclined to think, therefore, that he must have entertained on the subject views peculiar to himself, of which, never having heard them discussed, I can give no account."—Gleig's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 457. It is quite evident that Hastings's views on the subject were peculiar to himself, since no one else entertained them, and the biographer

was concluded between the British government and the ruler of Oude, one main object of which was to relieve the latter from burdens which he declared himself unable to bear. His stipulated payments to the Company had fallen greatly into arrear; the maintenance of the British troops in Oude was thrown upon the government to which they belonged; and though the charge was regularly carried to the account of the vizier, there seemed little or no prospect of the respective entries ever being neutralized by a record of corresponding payments on the opposite page. Under these circumstances, the continuance of the British force in Oude to its existing extent was, not without reason, regarded by Hastings as desirable for neither party; the British government making an outlay which it

might, therefore, safely have expressed himself with less hesitation. With regard to the cases supposed by him, for the sake of being refuted, it may be observed, on the first, that to pocket the money without notice might not have been altogether safe. Hastings may certainly be acquitted of dishonesty in making the request, for there is nothing dishonest in simply asking for any thing, however extravagant and unseasonable the request may be; but to say that the act was not that of a mercenary man, because Hastings was not mercenary, nor the result of weakness, because he was not weak, is, in each case, palpably begging the question. To these suppositions, however, another might have been added. Was the act, which the friends of Hastings can neither account for nor excuse, that of a desperate man? of one who discerned in the horizon the elements of a storm, which might be fatal to his power, and who, in the hope of alleviating the evils of his fall by the comforts of wealth, ventured one reckless cast for its attainment, with but little hope, indeed, of winning, but with the conviction that he could lose nothing—except character?

CHAP. XII. could ill afford; the vizier adding to a debt, already large, which there was but little probability of being speedily reduced. It was, therefore, provided by the new treaty, that a portion of the British force should be withdrawn. Other reasons were assigned by the governor-general in justification of this part of the treaty. He alleged, and most probably with truth, that the distance at which the troops were placed from the government to which they were responsible exempted the officers from due control, afforded opportunity for unwarrantable emoluments, and diffused the contagion of peculation and rapacity throughout the army. Further, he represented that the number of British officers, civil and military, at the court and in the service of the vizier, their vast influence and enormous emoluments, were not only injurious to the revenue and authority of the prince, but exposed the British nation and government to the envy and resentment of the people of the country, by excluding the vizier's native servants and adherents from honours and rewards to which they might reasonably aspire. In proof of the purity of his motives in consenting to a reduction, Hastings appealed to the facts that he was thereby diminishing the patronage of himself and his colleagues, and incurring the resentment of those injuriously affected by the arrangements, as well as of their long train of friends and connections.

The second article of the treaty, after reciting that great distress had arisen to the vizier from the mili-

tary power and dominion assumed by the jagheerdars, provided that the vizier should be at liberty to resume such jaghires as he might find necessary, with a reserve that, in all cases where the Company was guarantee, the amount of the net collection should, on the resumption of the lands, be paid in ready money to the dispossessed jagheerdar, through the British resident.

The third article related to Fyzoola Khan. This was the chief whose protracted resistance had for some time deferred the final termination of the Rohilla war.* More fortunate than some of his companions in arms, he obtained by treaty the grant of certain districts of considerable value, binding himself, in return, to retain in his service not more than five thousand troops, and in time of war to assist the vizier with two or three thousand, according to his ability. To this treaty Fyzoola Khan was very anxious to obtain the guarantee of the British government, and he finally succeeded. On the breaking out of the French war, the English sought assistance from Fyzoola Khan. Some was afforded, but not enough to meet their necessities or wishes, and the vizier was requested to demand from Fyzoola Khan the aid of five thousand horse. The answer of the chief was to the effect that his force consisted of only two thousand horse and three thousand foot; that the former were at the service of the British government, and that part of them were actually so employed; but that the three

* See page 47.

CHAP. XII. thousand foot were wanted at home, and that without them the collections could not be made. The governor-general thought fit to regard this answer as evasive, and, with the concurrence of his council, directed the British resident at Lucknow to demand three thousand horse from Fyzoola Khan. The demand was made and refused; but the refusal was softened by an offer to furnish two thousand horse and one thousand foot; an offer which the instructions of the British negotiator did not permit him to accept. The vizier, therefore, proposed the resumption of the jaghire of Fyzoola Khan; and the third article of the treaty of Chunarghur declared that the chief had, by his breach of treaty, forfeited the protection of the English:* a declaration followed by a provision permitting the vizier, "when time should suit," to resume the jaghire, paying to the chief its value as recognized by the treaty, after deducting the charges of the troops which he stood "engaged to furnish by treaty," the amount of which was to be paid to the Company.

It is impossible to characterize these proceedings otherwise than as grossly iniquitous. Fyzoola Khan was bound to furnish to the vizier "two or three thousand men, according to his ability," but nothing was stipulated as to the description of men. When aid is required, five thousand, instead of two or three, are demanded, and these cavalry, although the treaty does not give the right of insisting that a single man shall be mounted. The demand is then reduced, so as to bring it, with respect to number,

within the letter of the treaty; but the "ability" of Fyzoola Khan is assumed at the highest point, and three thousand men are called for. They are offered; but it is still insisted that the whole shall be cavalry, and upon the chieftain's refusal to comply, it is solemnly declared that the treaty has been broken, that the guarantee of the British government has been withdrawn, and that the vizier may possess himself of his vassal's lands whenever it shall suit his convenience. It is true, that it was alleged that Fyzoola Khan kept more troops than were allowed by the treaty, and that some deception had been practised as to the value of his jaghire. Neither of these charges is improbable; but it was upon his assumed failure to furnish the military aid stipulated by the treaty that sentence of deposition was passed upon him. CHAP. XII.

It cannot but be desirable to become acquainted with the precise views of the governor-general in the course pursued towards Fyzoola Khan. Happily he has explained them in a document which accompanied the treaty of Chunarghur, when transmitted to his colleagues. His comment on the article relating to Fyzoola Khan commences thus:—"The conduct of Fyzoola Khan in refusing the aid demanded, though not an absolute breach of treaty, was evasive and uncandid." The article to which Hastings was adverting assumes a breach of treaty on the part of Fyzoola Khan, and visits it with punishment. The man who subscribed this article on the part of the British government says that there was no ab-

CHAP. XII. solute breach of treaty. According to the private opinion of the governor-general, which was quite at variance with his public opinion, the chief fault of Fyzoola Khan was want of candour. Well was it for Hastings that this offence was not always punished with loss of office; had such been the rule, his name would scarcely have found a place in the history of British India. Having determined the offence of Fyzoola Khan, the governor-general proceeds to misrepresent the conditions of the treaty with which it was connected. "The demand," says he, "was made for five thousand cavalry. The engagement in the treaty is, literally, for five thousand horse and foot." This assertion is untrue. Fyzoola Khan was restrained by treaty from keeping in his service more than five thousand men; but the amount of his assistance to the vizier, as already stated, was to be "two or three thousand men, according to his ability." The governor-general proceeds to observe, that the British government were in great want of cavalry, and in no want of infantry, and complains that "so scrupulous an attention to literal expression, when a more liberal interpretation would have been highly useful and acceptable to us, strongly marks his unfriendly disposition, though it may not impeach his fidelity:"—an extraordinary remark, but less extraordinary than that with which the governor-general closes the subject. "I am of opinion that neither the vizier's nor the Company's interests would be promoted by depriving Fyzoola Khan of his independency, and I have, therefore,

reserved the execution of the agreement to an indefinite term, and our government may always interfere to prevent any ill effect from it!" It is thus attested by Hastings himself, that he not only pledged the British government to the recognition of an alleged fact—that Fyzoola Khan had broken the treaty with the vizier; while he privately avowed his conviction that the allegation was false, but that he solemnly engaged, on the part of that government, that one of its allies should be permitted to do that which Hastings did not think ought to be done, and which, in the very act of conceding, he had taken precautions to prevent! Volumes of elaborate disquisition could not reveal the character of Hastings so completely as the few sentences of comment on the third article of the treaty of Chunarghur, which he has left for the information of posterity. It is for this reason that the transactions in which Fyzoola Khan was concerned have been dwelt upon at some length. Neither in themselves, nor in their results, are they of any importance; but as illustrating the character and the policy of one who acted so conspicuous a part on the stage of Indian politics as did Hastings, they acquire an incidental value which gives them a title to be rescued from oblivion. Hastings, always vehement in upholding the wisdom and virtue of his own acts, could not rouse the zeal of self-laudation to the pitch of defending his conduct with regard to Fyzoola Khan. He attributed it to the hurry and agitation consequent on his situation at Chunarghur,

CHAP. XII. but it would be doing injustice to Hastings's calm intrepidity to accept the excuse. Danger never deprived Warren Hastings of self-command; and, as at the very moment when he was pretending to gratify the vizier by surrendering to him the territories of Fyzoola Khan he provided for defeating the object, it is clear that neither his usual coolness nor his usual craftiness had deserted him. Hastings at Chunarghur was all that he had ever been elsewhere —the crooked and reckless politician, but the calm and dauntless man. In quitting this subject it is only necessary to state, that Fyzoola Khan was not dispossessed of his dominions—that his military service was ultimately commuted for a pecuniary payment, on which occasion Hastings gave a true version of the treaty between the vizier and his dependant, and represented the great advantages of thus getting rid of "an article of a treaty, which was of such a tenour and so loosely worded, that the vizier could never have derived any real advantage from it."

The fourth article of the new treaty with the vizier related to the withdrawal of the British resident from Furruckabad, and requires no notice here. All these articles were suggested by the vizier, and conceded for his gratification. In return, the governor-general demanded nothing, but offered to the vizier abundance of good advice with respect to the reduction of unnecessary expense, and the regular and orderly management of his finances, to which the prince engaged to attend.

The second article of the treaty, that which related to the general resumption of jaghires, was the most important in its consequences. Among those affected by it were two females of high rank—one the mother of the reigning prince, the other his grandmother. These ladies were endowed with jaghires for their maintenance, which were now doomed to confiscation; thus leaving them dependant for their future support on the good pleasure of the vizier, or on the power and inclination of the British government to compel him to perform his engagements. The begums knew the character of their miserable relative too well to place any confidence in him, and the recent conduct of the governor-general was not such as could lead them to entertain much respect for English faith.

In addition to the jaghires with which they were endowed, the begums possessed considerable treasure. The vizier had long coveted the possession of this; and Hastings, feeling that nothing could be more convenient to the finances of the British government than a transfer, to the vizier, of wealth which would immediately undergo a second transfer to the treasury of Bengal in liquidation of his debt, strenuously recommended the execution of the vizier's long-cherished wish. It is true that to the younger begum the good faith of the British government had been pledged for the protection of her property. In consideration of sums amounting to more than six hundred thousand pounds, advanced by her to meet the exigencies of her son, the Com-

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pany had solemnly guaranteed to her the full and entire enjoyment of her estates, effects, and jaghires. Subsequently to this agreement, both ladies had occasion to seek the protection of the British government against their relation, and its interference was afforded in a manner which evinced a just appreciation of the respective positions of all the parties concerned. In favour of the elder begum, who had no claim of right upon the Company's government, the resident at Oude was directed simply to remonstrate. With regard to the younger begum, whose property that government had bound itself to defend, a higher tone was assumed. The resident was directed to afford her support in *all the rights* she possessed in virtue of the treaty *concluded* between her and her son, under the guarantee of the Company. Notwithstanding this treaty—notwithstanding the subsequent formal recognition of its binding force, Hastings had, by an equally solemn instrument, consented to the deprivation of the begum of her jaghire, and to the confiscation of her moveable property. It was necessary to find reasons for the spoliation. The two following are those assigned by Hastings and his friends:—First, that the wealth of the younger begum belonged of *right* to the reigning prince; that it had either been improperly alienated from him by his father and predecessor, or fraudulently appropriated by his mother, and that her retention of it was at variance with the Mahometan law. Secondly, that both the begums were actuated by feelings of hostility to the British

government; that they had encouraged the rebellion of Cheyt Singh, and had excited disturbances in other places. The first of these reasons is not very formidable. If the begum had really no right to the wealth which she possessed, how came the British government to recognize the existence of her right, and formally engage to defend it? The objection, if valid, came too late. The governor-general and council were precluded by their own acts from taking advantage of it.

The second head of justification—the charge of hostility to the English—rests on a vast mass of documentary testimony, the analysis of which would fatigue without enlightening the reader. It must suffice to observe, that it consists of hearsay evidence of the loosest and most unsatisfactory character, scarcely meriting any sort of notice, and certainly far from sufficient to justify such a measure as the plunder of two women of high rank of all that they possessed. An extraordinary effort was made to give importance to this evidence by the mode in which it was taken. It consisted of a vast number of affidavits, which were sworn before the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Calcutta and the judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut. It will be recollected that the two titles do not designate two persons: Sir Elijah Impey, charged with the administration of justice in two courts subsisting under two different authorities, found time, notwithstanding, to exercise magisterial functions which do not appear to have devolved upon him in virtue of

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his connection with either. His stormy contests with the governor-general lulled into the most soothing calm, he was now ready to lacquey the heels of the same governor-general, for no higher purpose than that of hearing affidavits sworn at a place where this leviathan of judicial dignity could not, either as a King's or Company's judge, pretend to any jurisdiction. The plan originated with the chief justice himself. Hastings was preparing a narrative to vindicate his own conduct in relation to Benares and Oude. Tenderness for the reputation of the governor-general induced the learned judge to suggest, with more zeal than politeness, that the people of England would not believe Hastings on his own word, and that it would be advisable to support his statement by affidavits. The governor-general thereupon inquired whether Sir Elijah Impey would receive the necessary affidavits, and the ever-ready judge promptly complied. The resident and his assistant appear generally to have procured the depositions, the chief justice swore the party offering them, and thus was this remarkable body of evidence collected.*

The execution of the design which Hastings had thus prepared to justify was, however, more tardy than he had either wished or expected. From timidity, or some other cause, the vizier was slow in carrying out the views which he appeared to entertain in common with the governor-general. On the part of the begums there was neither timidity nor vacil-

* Minutes of Evidence on the Trial of Hastings, vol. i.

lation. They remonstrated against the impending alienation of their property. They prepared to follow up remonstrance by resistance, and so formidable did their preparations appear to the British resident, that he requested a regiment of sepoys to support the vizier's officers. It is here necessary to observe, that Mr. Bristow, who had been reluctantly re-appointed to the office of resident at Oude, in consequence of the compact with Francis, had been again removed, and his place supplied by Hastings's attached follower, Mr. Middleton. This was in open disregard of the orders of the Court of Directors; but such acts on the part of the governor-general had become so frequent, that they scarcely call for notice, except where it is necessary to enable the reader properly to understand the events presented to him.

The governor-general, resolved that the designs of the vizier should not miscarry for want of a sufficient force, proposed to answer the call of Mr. Middleton with an extraordinary degree of liberality. Instead of one regiment, he directed the march of four, with a field train; but the resident was apprehensive that the approach of so numerous a force would be disagreeable to the vizier, and on his suggestion its march was countermanded. In the mean time Mr. Middleton applied himself to quicken the flickering energy of the vizier, and at length obtained his authority to seize the kellah at Fyzabad, in which the younger begum resided. This was effected without bloodshed by a regiment of British sepoys, supported

CHAP. XII. by a portion of the vizier's troops; the force which had been collected for the defence of the dwelling retiring, and drawing up in front of another house belonging to the elder begum, to which the younger lady had previously withdrawn. The vizier thereupon issued an order, requiring all armed men, except his own troops,* to depart beyond the precincts of the town, under pain of being attacked. Some delay took place in yielding obedience to the order; but the two principal eunuchs attached to the establishment of the younger begum surrendering themselves, the town was soon evacuated by their armed followers. After an interval of a few days, an arrangement was made, the begum undertaking to surrender all the treasure which had belonged to the former vizier.

The process of surrender commenced, but proceeded with a tardiness proportioned to the repugnance with which it was undertaken. To quicken its progress, the two confidential advisers of the begum were put in irons and restrained from food. To relieve themselves, these persons entered into an engagement for the payment of a large sum; but, in fulfilling its terms, the usual proportion of oriental delay and evasion was not wanting. After various attempts to extort payment by appeals to the fears of the prisoners, they were removed to Lucknow.

* The English troops were of course excepted from the operation of this order; but this is not stated in the authority on which this part of the narrative rests: a letter of Mr. Middleton, 17th January, 1782, reporting the events to the governor-general.

The following letter was addressed to the officer of the guard there by Mr. Johnson, the acting resident. "The Nabob having determined to inflict corporal punishment upon the prisoners under your guard, this is to desire that his officers, when they shall come, may have free access to the prisoners, and be permitted to do with them as they shall see proper; only taking care that they leave them always under your charge." It is not clear whether the infliction of direct torture were actually intended, or whether this letter was only a new expedient to work upon the fear of the miserable prisoners, in the expectation of drawing forth a little more money. There is no proof that the order was ever acted upon, and as the prisoners do not appear to have complained of any severities exceeding those that they had previously suffered, the presumption is, that imprisonment, fetters, and deprivation of food, constituted the sum of their sufferings. Still it is lamentable to find the name of a servant of the British government attached to a letter, avowedly sanctioning the use of torture, as the means of extorting money. Nor can it even be denied that, to a certain extent, the practice had been previously employed, and without resorting to the vizier's authority as a screen. The irons fixed on the limbs of the prisoners were not imposed for the purpose of security, but because it was judged that the pain and inconvenience produced by them would render the wearers anxious to purchase ease by the surrender of treasure, and it

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cannot be even pretended that the withholding of food could have any other object.

While the begums' servants were trembling in captivity at Lucknow, the palace of the begums at Fyzabad was blockaded. But these violent measures being found at last to fail of producing any adequate effect, the begums were relieved from the presence of their besiegers, and their long suffering servants set at liberty.

The joy of the latter at their deliverance is represented as being deeply affecting; weak, timid, and considerably advanced in years, these persons were little calculated to meet the trials to which they were exposed. It seems impossible to exempt those to whom they owe their sufferings from the charge of cruelty, or to deny that the series of transactions, of which those sufferings form part, present a very discreditable passage in the history of the connection of England and India. The precise share of the discredit which is due to the governor-general has been questioned; but it would be difficult to exonerate him from any portion of it. To the seizure of the jaghire which had been guaranteed to the younger begum by the British government he gave his deliberate assent. The seizure of the treasures seems to have been an after-thought, and it was suggested by the vizier that it should be regarded as a substitute for the intended confiscation of the jaghires. Hastings entirely approved of the design of appropriating the hoarded wealth of the begums'

but not as a ransom for their lands. He insisted that both should be taken, and, with some reluctance, the vizier yielded. Hastings, it must be added, expressed great disapprobation of the conduct of the resident, Mr. Middleton; but it was not on account of his rigour, but of his moderation. He was too slow in fulfilling the orders of the governor-general to place the begums entirely at the mercy of the vizier. Such was the language of Hastings; such were his views with regard to the parties against whom the proceedings were mainly directed. The cruelties inflicted upon the unhappy servants of the begums are not attributable to any positive orders of Hastings, but he was apprized of them shortly after they commenced, and it does not appear that he even expressed any disapprobation of them. He was resolved that money should be obtained, and he was never scrupulous as to the means by which an object upon which his mind was fixed was to be achieved.

His situation has been urged in his defence, and his situation was undoubtedly difficult and perilous. With an exhausted treasury, he had to find the means of carrying on expensive wars. But if Hastings might dispossess the begums of their property merely because he wanted it, he might have taken the same course with regard to any other parties, and those ladies were unfortunate in being the most convenient objects of plunder. Hastings, however, contended that the penalties inflicted upon the begums were just, and if so, he requires not the plea

CHAP. XII. of necessity. If, on the other hand, the begums were treated with injustice, the necessities of the governor-general cannot alter the character of the acts which he sanctioned and enforced. A state, like an individual, must supply its necessities by honest means.

With states, indeed, as well as with individuals, want is often the incentive to crime. Various instances of this are to be found in the early history of British dominion in India. Jaffier Ali Khan was dethroned, and Meer Cossim elevated to his place, because the British treasury was empty. Hastings engaged in the Rohilla war from a similar motive, and the spoliation of the begums can claim no more respectable origin. Such acts are incapable of solid defence, and their moral deformity is so striking as scarcely to need exposure. The plea of necessity is that of the sturdy mendicant or the vagrant freebooter, and it is disgraceful to rulers, professing to govern in the spirit of justice and civilization, to have recourse to it. The story of the errors and cunning of those who have thus sacrificed right to apparent expediency is not without value, as a warning to those who occupy similar high stations and are subject to the like responsibilities. It suggests the importance of a careful improvement of the resources of the countries which they govern, and a careful administration of their finances, in order to avert that pressure of necessity under which the honour of public men has so often been lost, and that of their country impaired. Nor is this the only

lesson afforded: the unanimous judgment of honest and impartial men has stamped with reprobation the more than equivocal acts by which Hastings and others have, at various times, sought to relieve the distresses of the state which they governed. Such will be the lot of those, if any should unhappily be found, who shall follow their example. They will purchase present ease at the price of permanent disgrace. This is to be remembered, when necessity calls for extraordinary measures to meet it. No management can command unvarying financial prosperity; no wisdom of administration can ensure exemption from reverses. Misfortune may overtake the most prudent rulers and frustrate the most judicious plans. At such moments, when the question arises, what is to be done to relieve the presence of distress? self-respect, if all other motives be wanting, should suggest the answer—any thing within the limits of justice and honour—nothing beyond them. CHAP. XII.

The meeting of Hastings and the vizier at Chunarghur took place in September, 1781. The rest of the year was consumed in endeavouring to force the courage of the vizier to the point necessary for executing the views of the governor-general. The first part of the year 1782 was occupied in the violent proceedings for obtaining possession of the wealth of the begums, which have been related. Violent as they were, they appeared to the governor-general too tame; and his displeasure on this occasion, as has already been noticed, was intimated in no equi- A.D. 1782.

CHAP. XII. vocal terms to the resident, Mr. Middleton. At last, this long-patronized favourite of Hastings relinquished the office in which Hastings had pertinaciously maintained him, and his place was supplied by Mr. Bristow, a man towards whom the governor-general had always manifested the most bitter hostility, and in whom he had repeatedly declared he could place no confidence. Two years before this extraordinary appointment took place, Hastings had thus expressed himself in a private letter:—"The wretch, Bristow, is gone to Lucknow. If he attempts to do mischief there, I will recal him. For God's sake, help to rid me of so unworthy an antagonist, and to gain me the privilege of employing my own instruments, if the future salvation of the Company is to be left to my care. I will not employ Bristow, though my life should be the forfeit of my refusal."* He did, however, at no great distance of time, employ the man whom he had stigmatized as "a wretch," and at the very place where he had expressed an apprehension that he might do mischief; this too, although there was apparently no prospect of his life being endangered by refusal. To unravel the mystery which hangs over this appointment would be difficult, if not impossible, and the subject is of so little public interest, that the result, if attainable, would not repay the necessary labour. Hastings appears to have ascribed the appointment to

* See Gleig's Memoirs of Hastings, vol. ii. page 336. It is not stated to whom this letter was addressed, but it may be presumed that it was to Mr. Sulivan.

a desire to gratify one of his colleagues in council,* but his habitual dissimulation renders this doubtful. One point, at least, is clear; it would argue little acquaintance with the character of Hastings to suppose that he was influenced by the opinion of the Court of Directors in favour of Mr. Bristow. To whatever his conduct might be owing, it was certainly not to this. CHAP. XII.

As might be expected, Mr. Bristow gave no greater satisfaction than his predecessor, and a few months after his appointment the governor-general proposed his recal. The proposal was rejected by his colleagues, and Mr. Bristow was permitted to retain his office a little longer.† Hastings, however,

* See Gleig's Memoirs of Hastings, vol. ii. page 133.

† The council at this time consisted of the governor-general, Mr. Wheler, Mr. Macpherson, formerly agent to the Nabob of Arcot (whose rise to high station in the Company's service will hereafter be adverted to), and Mr. Stables, previously, like Mr. Wheler, a director. Hastings was much annoyed by their opposition, and had they possessed the energy of Clavering, Monson, and Francis, a repetition of the stormy scenes of former days might have taken place. Hastings, in one of his letters to his agent in England, Major Scott, draws the characters of his colleagues in a manner which, if not implicitly to be trusted, nevertheless deserves to be quoted as pourtraying his own feelings towards them. Hastings says, "You will wonder that all my council should oppose me: so do I. But the fact is this; Macpherson and Stables have intimidated Wheler, whom they hate, and he them, most cordially. Macpherson, who is himself all sweetness, attaches himself everlastingly to Stables, blows him up into a continual tumour, which he takes care to prevent from subsiding: and Stables, from no other cause that I know, opposes me with a rancour so uncommon, that it extends even to his own friends, if my wishes chance to precede his own in any proposal to serve them. In council he

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never yielded a purpose, if it were possible to carry it; if foiled in one attempt, he had recourse to another, differing somewhat in character or in the means of making it. He now proposed the abolition of the British residency at Oude, and the restoration of power to the native authorities. This proposal was discussed

sits sulky and silent, waiting to declare his opinion when mine is recorded; or if he speaks, it is to ask questions of cavil, or to contradict, in language not very guarded, and with a tone of insolence which I should ill bear from an equal, and which often throws me off the guard of my prudence; for, my dear Scott, I have not that collected firmness of mind which I once possessed, and which gave me such a superiority in my contests with Clavering and his associates."—Gleig's Memoirs of Hastings, vol. iii. pages 121, 122. In another part of the same letter Hastings writes: "I stay most reluctantly on every account, for my hands are as effectually bound as they were in the year 1775, but with this difference, that there is no lead substituted to mine."—*Ibid. page 129.* In another letter to Major Scott, Hastings again gives flow to his sentiments of his colleagues. After assigning fear of the inquiries and proceedings then in progress at home as one of the motives of their conduct, and stating that Mr. Wheler had confessed it, he says, "As to the other two, they received an early hint from their friends not to attach themselves to a fallen interest, and they took the first occasion to prove that, if I was to be removed, their removal was not to follow as a necessary consequence of their connection with me, by opposing me on every occasion, on the most popular grounds, on the plea of economy and obedience of orders, which they apply indiscriminately to every measure which I recommend, and Mr. Stables with a spirit of rancour which nothing can equal but his ignorance. His friend, with the most imposing talents and an elegant and unceasing flow of words, knows as little of business as he does, and Mr. Wheler is really a man of business; yet I cannot convince him of it, nor persuade him to trust to his own superiority. He hates them, and is implicitly guided by them, and so he always will be by those who command him, and possess at the same time a majority of voices."—Ibid. pages 145, 146.

by the members of council through several days, towards the close of the year 1783, and Hastings triumphed. He subsequently tendered his own services to proceed to Lucknow, and, though opposed in council, he succeeded in carrying this point also. On the 17th February, he departed on his journey, and, passing through Benares, had an opportunity of witnessing the wretched state of the districts formerly administered by Cheyt Singh. The manager first appointed to act for the rajah had been dismissed, because he did not make his payments with punctuality. His successor, acting upon the principle that the sum fixed for the revenue must be collected, had subjected the inhabitants to terrible exactions, which, together with a long continued drought, had reduced the country to devastation. At Lucknow, where he arrived on the 27th March, the principal business of Hastings was to make arrangements for the payment of the vizier's debt to the Company, but he also took the opportunity of restoring to the begums a portion of the jaghires of which they had recently been violently deprived. This act is more difficult to be accounted for than that by which the ladies were despoiled. It is true that the treatment of the begums had been severely animadverted upon at home, but Hastings was not in the habit of paying much attention to such circumstances; and it is somewhat remarkable that, after denouncing the princesses as the inveterate enemies of the British government, watching for opportunities of undermining it and anxiously de-

CHAP. XII. A.D. 1783. A.D. 1784.

CHAP. XII. siring its destruction, he now spoke of both ladies as being entirely in his interest, and expressed his belief that their influence with the vizier would be exercised beneficially for the country which he represented.* The reader who has followed the history of Hastings to this period will, however, have become accustomed to these sudden changes, and have ceased to feel any surprise at them. On the 27th
A. D. 1784. of August Hastings quitted Lucknow, and on his way through Benares endeavoured to restore some degree of order, the country being almost without a government. He arrived in Calcutta early in November, and in February following embarked *for* England.

* See his letter to Mrs. Hastings (then in England) in vol. ii. of Gleig's Memoirs.

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By an act of parliament passed in the year 1779, the powers of the existing government of Bengal were continued for one year :* by another act, passed in 1780, they were renewed for one year more. In 1781 an act was passed, by which the right of the Company to their exclusive trade, and to the territorial possessions of India, was confirmed to them until the expiration of three years' notice to be given by parliament after the 1st of March, 1791. In the same session an act was passed to remedy the abuses of the Supreme Court.† This session also produced the appointment of a select and a secret committee of the House of Commons on Indian affairs, the one proposed by the opposition, the other by the minister. Each committee made numerous and voluminous reports.

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India, indeed, continued to occupy, in an unusual degree, the attention of parliament. In May, 1782, a resolution, condemnatory of the conduct of Hastings, was voted by the House of Commons, and the Court of Directors resolved to recal him. In the

* As noticed at page 129. † See note on page 148.

CHAP. XIII. general court Hastings was more fortunate, a considerable majority declaring against his recal.

Other resolutions subsequently passed the House of Commons, affecting various persons, and among them the King's chief justice, the Company's chief judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, and the governor-general's taker of affidavits, Sir Elijah Impey. The House addressed the Crown, praying for his recal, and an order to that effect was transmitted. Impeachment was threatened, but not carried into effect.

A period was approaching when the excitement previously existing on Indian affairs, great as it had been, was to be increased. The ministry of Lord North had fallen early in the year 1782. The feeble and short-lived administrations of the Marquis of Rockingham and Earl of Shelburne followed in succession. The latter was destroyed by the force of the united parties of Mr. Fox and Lord North, whose triumph introduced a cabinet famous in the history of British party as the coalition ministry. The two sections of which this ministry was composed had been long engaged in determined hostility to each other. The habitual urbanity of Lord North had restrained him from indulging in the furious invective of his opponents, but the violence of their language towards him had been unmeasured: yet they were now his allies—a common desire to storm the seat of power having brought together men whose differences appeared irreconcilable. They had succeeded; the seals of office were theirs, but not the

confidence of the Crown, nor the good-will of the people. By the King they were hated. Mr. Fox and his party he had long disliked, and his late favourite, Lord North, by his union with that party, had lost for ever the confidence of his Majesty, which he had before so largely enjoyed. With the people the new ministry was eminently unpopular, the monstrous sacrifice of principle which had been made for its formation having disgusted honest and consistent men of all parties. Still the ministry was strong; it had the support of a vast majority of the great and powerful families of the country, and on this ground it hoped to defy the united hostility of King and people. CHAP. XII.

At this time every man could declaim on the misgovernment of India, and every man was prepared with a remedy; it would have been strange, therefore, if a ministry, so bold and, in their own belief, so strong, should have shrunk from the task of reforming Indian affairs. The coalition ministry entered office in April, 1783. On the 18th of November following, Mr. Fox, one of the secretaries of state, moved for leave to bring in a bill "for the better government of our territorial possessions and dependencies in India." Having prepared the way, by attacking the East-India Company and all persons connected with it, Mr. Fox proceeded to expound the plan which himself and his colleagues had prepared for its annihilation. All power, commercial as well as political, was to be taken from the Company and transferred to two boards: one to A. D. 178

CHAP. XIII. consist of seven persons, to hold office for a term of years, under whose control the whole government of India was to be placed; the other to be composed of a larger number of persons to be called assistants, who were to manage the commercial business, but subject to the control of the chief board of seven. The members of these boards were to be appointed in the first instance by parliament —that is, they were to be appointed by the coalition ministry. Subsequently, vacancies in the supreme board were to be supplied by appointment of the King; in the inferior, by election by the proprietors of East-India stock. These regulations exposed the objects of the contrivers of the plan, and proved them to have been power and patronage. The members of the supreme board, it has been seen, were to be nominated by the minister, either in parliament or in the closet. The members of the inferior board were, after the first appointments, to be elected by the proprietors of East-India stock. Why were the first appointments excepted? There can be but one answer. Because the ministry wanted the power of providing for some hungry dependents. The whole patronage of India, too, was, directly or indirectly, transferred to the ministry. It was to be exercised by seven persons, nominated in the first instance by a parliament in which the voice of the minister was predominant, and subsequently by the minister for the time being, in the name of the King. It was to be transferred from a quarter where it could rarely, if ever, be used for po-

litical purposes, to hands by which it would never be employed for any other purpose. From one section of the cabinet, this perhaps might have been expected. Lord North and his friends had been charged, whether justly or unjustly, by their former opponents and present colleagues, with a disposition to favour arbitrary principles; but how was the plan to be reconciled to the doctrines of the other section of the administration—of the men who had always professed to dread the extension of ministerial influence, and who avowed a belief "that the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished?"—how could they support a project for adding a vast mass of the most desirable patronage to that already possessed by the ministry, and thus increasing an influence which they represented as threatening to overwhelm the liberties of the country? The answer is, when they indulged in denouncing the growing influence of the Crown or the ministry, they were out of office, and with no immediate prospect of dispensing that influence which they professed to abhor—they were now in office, and their new position was so agreeable, that they were anxious to retain it as long as possible. Mr. Powys, a county member who took a conspicuous part in the debate, imagined the great leader of the popular section of the cabinet to express himself in this manner: "I have now forced myself into a most exalted station; the people, by whose means I reached it, begin, however, to think less of me than before. But still I have great influence in the country. I have formed

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connections with many of the first families in the kingdom—families of the highest rank and most distinguished character, who are all combined to support my administration. I have joined a party which I had driven two years ago from the helm of government, by my unremitted exertions for years together. But as my popularity is on the wane, I will make good use of my time: the whole Indies shall, for this reason, contribute to the splendour and permanence of my power. I will take advantage of the zenith of my power to build me a golden fortress in the midst of the land of promise. That fortress I will not only render impregnable, but garrison with a select number of picked friends and chosen adherents, on whose zeal and attachment I can safely rely—a fortress which no contingency shall be able to assail with success—which will neither yield to the call of the people nor the inclination of the sovereign."*

* Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xxiii. page 1310. Among the passages most deserving notice in the debates arising on Fox's East-India Bill, some observations of Mr. Beaufoy may be referred to. He said, "Examine the effects which this system will have on the rights of the India Company—examine the effects it will have on the British constitution—you will find it embarrassed with difficulties without end—evils of uncommon magnitude rise upon the view. This bill avowedly abrogates the Company's charter. Charters, Sir, are not like other laws, repealable at the will of the legislature; they are compacts, and cannot be justly cancelled without the consent of both the contracting parties. That parliament has a right to interfere in prescribing the mode in which the Company's territorial possessions shall be governed, no doubt can be entertained; for such interference im-

The ministry, however, relying on their numerical strength, felt that they could defy alike general reasoning and personal attack, for on every division they commanded a majority of about two to one; and the

plies no breach of the Company's charter. But to subvert their constitution on the plea of an unproved and unreal necessity—unproved and unreal as applied to these objects—to violate solemn compacts—to break through engagements, for the observance of which the faith and honour of the nation have been pledged—the authority of parliament itself does not extend so far; for even the omnipotence of parliament is circumscribed by the eternal laws of justice. Is there a man who ventures to deny this maxim? One such man it seems there is—'Away with their chartered rights,' said the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke); 'you are not bound to observe them;' the great charter gives you authority to violate all other charters—the great charter gives you a right to do the extremity of wrong. Such is the spirit of this new system—such are the maxims by which its advocates recommend it to the house. But the sacred rights which charters give are not the only rights which this bill violates; it has a wider aim, for its principle is levelled at all the rights of property. The same power which appoints agents and stewards to the Company against their will, and makes them independent of their control, may equally appoint an agent and steward to the estate of every gentleman who hears me—may equally assign the management of his affairs, the collection of his rents, and their disposal when collected, to a person in whose appointment his will had no share, and over whose actions he has no control. But the power which deprives him of the management and disposal of his property does, in effect, deprive him of his property itself. This principle once established, what security have the other public companies of the kingdom? What security has the Bank of England? What security has the South Sea Company? What security have any of the public corporations? What security have the national creditors, or indeed any individual, either for his public or his private rights? It would be folly in the extreme to suppose that this principle, once admitted, will operate only on the affairs of the East-India Company. *Good prin-*

CHAP. XIII. bill being passed through all its stages in the House of Commons, was finally transferred to the Lords.

The East-India Company had petitioned the Commons against the bill, and been heard at its bar by counsel. The same course was taken in the upper house, though probably with but slender
A. D. 1783. expectations of success. On the 15th December, Mr. Dallas, one of the Company's counsel, having called some witnesses to establish the case which he was entrusted to support, requested that the house would indulge him by adjourning to the next day. This was opposed—especially by Earl Fitzwilliam, who was named in the bill as the first commissioner of the superior board. The Duke of Portland, the nominal head of the administration, followed, and adverted to an extraordinary rumour which had been circulated pretty generally, in which, he said, the name of the most sacred character in the kingdom had been aspersed, and the name of a noble lord, he hoped, abused. The Duke of Richmond spoke more distinctly, and read from a ministerial newspaper an article announcing the prevalence of a report, that his Majesty had withdrawn his appro-

ciples may sleep, but bad ones never will. It is the curse of society, that when a bad principle is once established, bad men will always be found to give it full effect."—Hansard, vol. xxiii. pages 1397, 1398. It is not unworthy of remark, that these observations did not come from a member disposed to maintain existing things solely because they exist. Mr. Beaufoy's opinions were what in those times were denominated extreme Whig, and which would now be called ultra liberal. He was for many years the leading representative in parliament of the interests of the Dissenters.

bation from the East-India Bill, and his confidence from those by whom it was framed, in consequence of an interview with Earl Temple, but treating the rumour as a fabrication. Earl Temple thereupon rose, and admitted that the King had honoured him with a conference, in which he had given certain advice. What that advice was he would not state; but he was ready, he said, to tell their lordships what it was not—it was not friendly to the principle and object of the India Bill. After some further discussion, a motion to postpone the further hearing of evidence till the following day was carried. On that day the business was resumed, and on the day after, the motion that "the bill be committed" was lost by a majority of nineteen. This was the result of the interview of Earl Temple with the King, and of the ascertained fact that his Majesty disapproved of the bill. Many peers who had entrusted their proxies to ministers withdrew them, and the Prince of Wales, who two days before had voted with ministers on the question of adjournment, on this occasion absented himself from the house. The fate of the ministry, as well as the fate of the bill, was now sealed. They had still an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons; but, encouraged by the decision of the upper house, the sovereign resolved to dismiss them. The mode in which this was effected was singularly expressive of the royal disapprobation. At twelve o'clock on the night of the 11th of December, a messenger delivered to the two secretaries of state an order from the King, "that

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CHAP. XIII. they should deliver up the seals of their offices, and send them by the under secretaries, Mr. Fraser and Mr. Nepean, as a personal interview would be disagreeable to him." The seals, as soon as delivered, were given to Earl Temple, who by letter announced to the remaining members of the cabinet their dismission from office.

A new ministry was forthwith formed, of which Mr. William Pitt, then only twenty-three years of age, became the head; but he found an intractable House of Commons, against whose opposition he for several weeks contended without effect. On the
A. D. 1784. 14th of January, 1784, he moved for leave to *bring* in a bill for the better government and management of the affairs of the East-India Company. *Its leading* provision was, "that a board should be instituted, to be appointed by his Majesty, consisting of one of the principal secretaries of state, the chancellor of the exchequer for the time being, and a certain number of the privy councillors," to which board the despatches of the Company were to be submitted for approval. The bill was brought in, passed through the earlier stages, and then, on a division, lost. Mr. Fox immediately moved for leave to bring in a bill on the same subject, but no progress was made with it. The contest between the two parties found other matter of excitement, which kept the House of Commons in a perpetual heat till the 24th of March, when parliament was dissolved.

In the new parliament the balance of parties was reversed, and the minister had a powerful majority.

On the 2nd July he introduced an India Bill, resembling in its principal provisions that which had been lost in the preceding session. It was opposed vehemently by the coalition party, but passed the House of Commons on the 28th July. It passed the Lords with far greater ease, and ultimately became law. As this act was the foundation of the present system of governing India, it may demand some degree of examination.

By the plan established in 1784, the patronage of India, the immediate management of its affairs, and the general right of originating all measures connected with them, remained with the Company. But these functions were to be exercised under the observation of a board, composed of persons nominated by the Crown, who were entitled to be fully informed of all matters connected with the political, military, and revenue affairs of India, and whose approbation was necessary to give effect to the measures suggested by the authority of the Company. In case of default by the Court of Directors, the board might originate despatches; and to provide for circumstances where secrecy might be required, the Court were to appoint a secret committee, through which the secret instructions of the board, when such were necessary, might be forwarded to the governments of India. The power thus established was not altogether new. By the act of 1781, the Court of Directors were bound to deliver to one of the Secretaries of State, copies of all proposed despatches on civil and military affairs, and to

CHAP. XIII. obey the instructions of the Crown in reference thereto: nor is it unreasonable that government should have the means of preventing political power exercised on behalf of the British Crown from being abused. It would perhaps be difficult to frame a plan for the government of distant possessions, which should possess greater advantages and fewer inconveniences than that under which the government of India has now for sixty years been conducted. If the East-India Company were to exercise the powers of government unchecked, abuses, similar to those which formerly called for the interference of parliament, might again arise. The interposition of the great body of proprietors, instead of being, as it now is, a salutary and useful expression of public opinion, might become, as of old, an instrument for effecting objects purely personal; and the Company's courts might again become the scene of furious contests, in which, though public principle might be pretended, none would be really involved, the matter in dispute being, in effect, whether one individual or another, or one or another knot of individuals, should be enriched by the possession of lucrative office in India. That a great empire should flourish under such a system is manifestly impossible; and while it affords matter of gratification that the popular part of the constitution of the East-India Company has been preserved, it is not less so that it has been rendered incapable of being used as an engine of mischief.

The evils of the old system of government were attested by experience. Those which would have

resulted from a change which should have annihilated the powers of the Company, and transferred the entire administration of India to a government office, may readily be imagined. By dividing the power between the responsible advisers of the Crown and a body totally unconnected with political party, both classes of evils are to a great extent avoided. The patronage of India, which all constitutional authorities have thought it would be dangerous to place with the Crown, is deposited in the hands of a body over whom the Crown and its ministers can exercise scarcely any influence. With those who, thus free from political bias, administer this patronage rests the power also of communicating with the local governments, and of originating the orders and instructions transmitted for their guidance; but such orders requiring the approbation of a branch of the executive government of the Crown to give them effect, nothing at variance with the rights of the sovereign, with the general interests of the empire, or with the general policy of the ministry for the time being, can be carried into effect. Personal claims or complaints having to pass the ordeal of two inquiries, conducted under two different and independent authorities, will be far more likely to be decided with justice than if they were subjected only to one. The discussion called forth by such a system is another advantage which would be lost under any other differing from it essentially. The system might probably be improved in some mi-

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nute points,* but the principle which is at its foundation is admirable. It has been alleged that it is cumbersome and anomalous. All systems of check are to a certain extent cumbersome, but we submit to this inconvenience for the sake of security. The other objection scarcely deserves refutation. Government is a practical matter, and, if its objects be attained, it is of little importance whether or not the machinery be regular and symmetrical.

Besides establishing the Board of Control, the East-India Act of Mr. Pitt sought to check corruption in the servants of the East-India Company, by subjecting them to inquiry as to their fortunes, and by preparing for the trial of their offences a new tribunal. These provisions, however well intended, are not entitled to any portion of the praise which is due to the main object of the act. Servants of the Company, returning from India, were required to deliver inventories of their property, and this enactment was fortified by penalties of extreme severity. This part of the bill was repealed two years afterwards. It ought never to have been passed: the inquisitorial proceedings which it sanctioned are utterly inconsistent with the habits of a free

* As, for instance, in providing the means of formally and publicly recording the grounds of difference between the Board and the Court of Directors when irreconcilable. An objection, not altogether unimportant, has been taken to the constitution of the Home Government of India, as involving a divided responsibility, which objection would lose much of its force, if the Board of Commissioners and the Court of Directors each acted under the conviction that their differences of opinion would come before the public.

country. Another unfortunate portion of the act was, the creation of a new tribunal for the trial of Indian delinquents, and the provision of new modes of procedure against such criminals. Three of the judges were to be members of this extraordinary tribunal; the rest, seven in number, were to be members of the two houses of parliament, chosen by their fellow-members. The majority of the persons, therefore, to whom it was proposed to commit the investigation and punishment of Indian crime would have been political partizans. Among the novelties introduced into the forms of proceeding, was the admission of evidence taken in India before a competent tribunal, the effect of which would have been to place the liberty, property, and character of accused persons at the mercy of witnesses, and those Indian witnesses, whom they would have no opportunity of subjecting to cross-examination. Burke, in speaking of this monstrous tribunal, might well exclaim, "all that had yet been said of the judicature which was now established for the purpose of punishing the delinquencies committed in India fell short of its turpitude: it had no authority, example, similitude, or precedent, in the history of this country, except, perhaps, the Star Chamber of detestable memory. That institution, which had made the hearts of the whole nation to quake and tremble, was composed of peers, privy councillors, and judges."* It is remarkable that this tribunal, which occupies nineteen sections of the act by which it was

* Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xxv. page 1279.

CHAP. XIII. established, and which two years afterwards was the subject of laborious modification by another act, the provisions of which are yet unrepealed, has never, in a single instance, been resorted to. A court was prepared, before which Indian delinquency was to tremble, but not a single criminal has ever been arraigned at its bar; and though the acts which provide for its existence may long continue to slumber on the Statute Book, there is little probability that its terrors will ever be called forth.

Pursuing the train of home affairs, we find the debts of the Nabob of Arcot occupying the attention of the Court of Directors, the government Board of Commissioners, and the House of Commons. By the act of 1784, an inquiry into this subject had been required. The Court of Directors proceeded to carry into effect the intention of the act, and framed a despatch, addressed to the governor and council of Madras, requiring them to enter upon a full investigation. But the authority with which the court had to co-operate took a different view. The newly constituted Board of Commissioners, at the head of which was Mr. Dundas, declared that no such inquiry as that proposed by the Court of Directors was necessary, and, dividing the alleged debts into three classes, they resolved that the account of the whole should be made up with interest, and that a portion of the revenues of the Carnatic should be annually set apart for the liquidation.

This was either a lamentable error of judgment

or a culpable breach of duty. The claims of the alleged creditors of the Nabob of Arcot were surrounded by circumstances of the highest degree of suspicion. If ever there were claims which called for minute and searching inquiry, such were these. The course taken by the ministry upon this question tended to cast great discredit upon them, and to afford to the opposition favourable ground of attack. On the 28th February, 1785, Mr. Fox called the attention of the House of Commons to the subject, and moved for the papers connected with the inquiry. The motion was lost, as were two similar motions in the House of Lords; but opportunity was taken to impugn the motives of the ministry, and to adduce plausible reasons for believing that the decision was attributable to parliamentary influence. It will be recollected that a person named Paul Benfield was one of the chief creditors of the Nabob of Arcot, and that he represented several other creditors.* Much jugglery had been subsequently practised, and the name of Benfield had disappeared from the list of creditors, and been restored to it, as circumstances suited. At length, Benfield had procured himself to be elected to parliament, together (according to Burke†) with seven other persons, of like principles and views with himself. He soon afterwards departed for Madras, leaving as his representative Mr. Richard Atkinson, a gentleman whom the ministry delighted to honour, on the ground, it was alleged and believed, of the pains which he had

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* See pages 200, 201.

† Speech on Fox's motion, 28th February, 1785.

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taken to promote the return of members of parliament favourable to their interests. The defence of ministers was weak, but their majority was large. The papers were refused, partly on the ground that the public interests might suffer from *giving them* publicity. It is not easy to suppose that *ministers* were influenced by this fear, for a bookseller had obtained a copy of the papers, and published them.

In this instance it must be admitted that the advantages of the revised system for administering the government of India were not fully realized, and that the power of the board of commissioners was used to perpetrate a foul job. Yet even *here* some advantage over the more simple system *is* apparent. The Court of Directors had *the power of* remonstrating against what they *considered* an act of gross injustice and *improvidence*, and they did remonstrate. Their resistance attracted the attention of the party opposed to ministers in parliament, and though the evil was not redressed, it was exposed.

The stage of Indian politics was now about to be occupied by a drama of greater dignity, though, perhaps, of less importance. For several years, the administration of Hastings had been violently attacked in parliament, and nearly every party in the state had joined in condemning him. In a series of reports, of which Burke was the framer, his principal acts had been assailed with great talent and great severity. Threats of further proceedings had been held out, and on the return of Hastings to England, Burke declared, that if the task were undertaken by

no one else, he should stand forth as the accuser of the returned governor-general. There can be little doubt that he was well disposed to execute the office which he thus undertook; but there is reason to believe that his own ardour was not shared by some of his parliamentary friends, without whose assistance the attempt must fail. The ministry, though some of the members were the pledged accusers of Hastings, were notoriously indisposed to proceed against him; and had Hastings been willing to accept the boon with which Sir Thomas Rumbold and others were content—had he been satisfied with retirement and impunity, it is possible, as the pledges of statesmen are soon forgotten, that he might have been permitted to sink undisturbed into obscurity. But Hastings was ambitious. He had come back, not to throw himself upon the forbearance of his foes, but to challenge honours and rewards. He was aware that his enemies were numerous and, both from their abilities and political influence, powerful: but he knew also, that he was not without supporters; some acting from principle and feeling—some stimulated by the liberality with which he distributed his funds. In addition to this source of encouragement, he felt strong in the consciousness that he deserved what he sought. Looking back to the many equivocal, and more than equivocal, acts of his administration, this may appear strange, but it was undoubtedly the fact. Hastings's extravagant self-esteem would not allow him to believe that he could do wrong, or at least that

CHAP. XIII. he could err to any serious extent. The proudest pontiff that ever boasted the power of the keys had scarcely a higher opinion of his own infallibility than had Hastings. He expressed astonishment that acts, which all mankind condemned, *should* draw forth reprobation—and his astonishment was not always affected. In some cases, there is no doubt that he really felt it: the acts were his—therefore, they were right. Under the influence of such feelings and hopes, Hastings was prepared to dare his opponents to the combat. It is not unlikely that in this course he was influenced by the conviction that they would not have the courage to proceed, and he could not but feel that, if they declined his challenge, they would leave him *in possession* of the vantage-ground.

Accordingly, at the commencement of the ses-
A.D. 1786. sion of 1786, Burke was reminded of his promise to proceed by Hastings's agent, Major Scott—who, the better to carry on the business of his principal, had, in conformity with the precedent set by the Nabob of Arcot's attornies, procured a seat in parliament. If Burke and his friends were wavering, this determined their course, and on the 17th February the preliminary proceedings against Hastings commenced, by a motion for papers relating to the presents and other monies privately received by the late governor-general. In the speech by which this matter was introduced, Burke announced his intention to proceed further; and after adverting to the various modes of effecting his purpose, a

prosecution in the ordinary courts of law, a bill of pains and penalties, and an impeachment before the House of Lords, declared his preference for the last. It will be unnecessary to pursue in detail the steps taken by Hastings's accusers. They continued to collect and bring forward various matters of charge till the 26th of April, when Major Scott presented a petition from Hastings, praying to be heard in his defence. Leave was granted, and on the 1st May the accused party appeared at the bar of the house, where he commenced reading a paper of great length, which he concluded on the following day. CHAP. XIII A. D. 1786.

Up to this period, and for some weeks afterwards, the influence of the ministry had been given to Hastings. On the 2nd June the House of Commons negatived a motion made in committee by Burke, on the conduct of Hastings, in relation to the Rohilla war, and Mr. Dundas, who a few years before had moved and carried a resolution condemnatory of that conduct, now voted in the majority. On the 13th of the same month Mr. Fox made a motion in committee, to the effect that there was ground for impeaching Hastings, in reference to his treatment of Cheyt Singh. By this time a revolution had taken place in the sentiments of the ministry; and Mr. Pitt, after a speech, in which he maintained that Cheyt Singh was a dependent of the British government, that he might reasonably be called upon for additional expenditure on extraordinary occasions, that the occasion on which Hastings desired assist-

CHAP. XIII. ance was such as to justify the demand, and that the amount required was not excessive, declared his intention to vote with the accusers of the governor-general, on the ground that the fine which he levied was exorbitant. The friends of Hastings were astonished at this sudden change in the minister's views, which has never yet been adequately accounted for. It was now evident that, with ministers and opposition united against him, Hastings had nothing to hope from the House of Commons—that impeachment was inevitable, and that to the House of Lords he must look for the sentence which should finally deliver or condemn him.

A. D. 1787. Of the session of 1787 the charges against Hastings constituted the main business. On the 3rd of April a committee was appointed to prosecute an impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords. It included the celebrated names of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Windham. An attempt was made to introduce that of Hastings's old enemy, Francis, but it failed. At a later period it was renewed by a motion of Mr. Fox for adding Mr. Francis to the committee, which motion received the cordial support of Mr. Francis himself, in a speech of considerable length; but the House did not agree with the mover and his independent supporter, and rejected the proposal by a large majority. The managers consoled the disappointed candidate by a flattering letter, in which, notwithstanding his defeat, they requested that he would attend their meetings, and aid them by his information and counsel.

On the 10th of May the House of Commons proceeded to the bar of the House of Peers, and Mr. Burke, in their name, formally impeached Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors. Hastings was subsequently committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, from which he was discharged on finding bail, himself in £2,000, and two sureties in £1,000 each. There was little reason to believe that Hastings meditated escape; but if such an intention were apprehended, the amount of security required was ludicrously inadequate. CHAP. XII A. D. 1787.

The trial did not commence till the 13th of February in the following year. The excitement was extraordinary, and Westminster Hall, which was fitted up for the occasion, was crowded by groups of fashionable persons of both sexes, as though to witness a public spectacle. Two days were spent in reading the articles of impeachment and Hastings's answer, an exercise from which it is to be presumed the motley crowd of listeners derived but indifferent amusement. On the third day the great orator appeared, with all the advantage which the dry and tedious occupation of the preceding days could afford him. The duty assigned to Burke was to explain the grounds upon which the impeachment had been undertaken, and give a general view of the charges against the prisoner; an extensive field, no part of which the orator seemed willing to neglect. His speech was continued through four days, and, as an appeal to the passions, was pre-eminently successful. Ladies were carried out of the A. D. 1788

CHAP. XIII. hall in a fainting state, and even in the sterner sex Burke's descriptions produced visible agitation. These facts attest the power of the speaker; but had the effect of his eloquence been permanent, its exercise would have been most unjust to the prisoner, and greatly in opposition to the wise and salutary principle, that, in deciding on the guilt or innocence of an accused person, the verdict should be determined by evidence, not by declamation. It may be doubted, however, whether Burke's extraordinary display was not calculated to defeat his object. After being borne aloft on the wings of his impassioned eloquence, the judges had to listen to the cold and dry statements of the living witnesses that might be called to prove the alleged facts, or, what was *still* less exciting, to the reading of long extracts from official papers. Even if no facts were overstated in the opening address, the contrast between the fervour with which it was composed and delivered, and the long and monotonous supplement by which it was to be sustained, could scarcely fail to diminish the effect of the evidence below that which under other circumstances it would have produced. Had Burke been summing up after the evidence had been gone through, the splendid lights of his fancy might have succeeded in surrounding ordinary facts with a colouring not natural to them, and he might have carried the minds of the ardent and susceptible willing captives to the conclusion to which he was desirous of conducting them. As it was, he delivered a magnificent oration, which was listened to

with delight and eulogized with enthusiasm—and these were all the effects produced. CHAP. XI

Burke having concluded his task, Fox rose to state the course which the managers, on behalf of the Commons, proposed to pursue. It was to treat each charge separately; to open it, and then await the prisoner's defence before proceeding to another. The Lord Chancellor inquired whether this course would be agreeable to the counsel for the accused? they objected, as it must have been anticipated that they would. The Lords withdrew to consider the point, and determined that the entire case for the prosecution must be opened before the prisoner was called on for his defence. This decision was obviously just and reasonable. The mode of proceeding proposed by the managers was contrary to the practice of all courts of justice, and its adoption would have been an act of cruelty towards the prisoner, by subjecting him to the chance of being entangled in snares and pitfalls, from which neither discretion nor innocence might be able to preserve him.

The first charge opened against Hastings related to his conduct towards Cheyt Singh, and the court was addressed on this subject by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey.* In the examination of witnesses which followed, a fresh difference arose between the managers and the counsel for the prisoner. A witness called by the former having answered a question put by one of

* Now Earl Grey.

CHAP. XIII. them in the negative, was asked whether he had not, on a former occasion, answered the same question in the affirmative? Hastings's counsel objected, on the known principle that a party must not discredit his own witness. The point was decided by the Lords against the managers.

The second charge brought forward related to the begums of Oude. It was opened by Mr. Adam, who was followed by Mr. Pelham. Sixteen days were spent in hearing evidence, after which Sheridan summed up in a speech, inferior only to the opening speech of Burke in its exciting effect. No further progress was made during this session. The trial had occupied thirty-five days, and two charges, out of a list containing ten times that number, had been entered upon. Further proceedings were adjourned till the next session of parliament.

The illness of the King and other causes prevented
A.D. 1789. the resumption of the trial until the 21st of April, when a charge of receiving presents was opened by Mr. Burke. Having occasion in his speech to refer to Nuncomar, he used expressions of which Hastings complained by petition to the House of Commons. He said that "Hastings had murdered Nuncomar by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey." The language was strong, and its use could be justified only by reference to the extraordinary latitude of exaggeration in which advocates are accustomed to indulge. In the House of Commons the matter was treated in a great degree as a party question, and a motion submitted by Mr. Pitt, declaring that the House had

given Mr. Burke no authority to impute the death of Nuncomar to Hastings, was carried. CHAP. XIII.

In the prosecution of the charge relating to the receipt of presents, various questions arose as to the admissibility of evidence; the managers continually claiming an exemption from the ordinary rules of the courts, and the Peers invariably deciding that they were bound by them. In this manner the session of 1789 was consumed; and when half only of the charge relating to the receipt of presents had been proceeded with, the consideration of the remainder was postponed to a future session. Hastings complained of being subjected for so great a length of time to the anxiety of remaining on trial. His complaint was just, but it was couched in a tone of affected and overstrained humility, ludicrously contrasting with the arrogant character of the man. The next session was wasted in the same manner as the preceding. Parliament was then dissolved, and a question arose, whether the impeachment did not abate by the dissolution. After much delay, both houses determined that it did not; and, on the 23rd of May, 1791, proceedings were renewed in Westminster Hall. Another charge, imputing corruption in various forms, was opened, and with this the managers intimated their intention of closing their case. On the 2nd of June Hastings read his defence, and with this the proceedings of the session closed. A. D. 1791.

Two succeeding sessions, those of 1792 and 1793, were occupied by the speeches of counsel and the examination of witnesses in defence of Hastings.

CHAP. XIII. A. D. 1794. In that of 1794 the managers proceeded to reply to the case of the accused, and to adduce evidence in disproval of it; and their labours occupied all the time allotted by the House of Lords to the trial during that session. In 1795, the long protracted proceedings were at last brought to a close. On the A. D. 1795. 23rd of April, in that year, Hastings was acquitted on most of the articles of charge by large majorities, and on some unanimously. Thus terminated this most extraordinary trial, after a duration of seven years.

Of the four charges on which the Commons proceeded, the first afforded no just or reasonable ground for impeachment. Cheyt Singh was regarded by the accusers of Hastings as an independent prince, liable only to the payment of an annual tribute, which, under no circumstances, was to be increased. This was not his position. He was a disobedient dependent, and Hastings erred only in meditating the infliction of a punishment disproportioned to the offence. This deserved blame, but it did not deserve impeachment. The charge respecting the begums was far better founded. Here the conduct of Hastings merited something more than mere censure. The charge relating to presents would also have justly subjected him to punishment, could it have been proved; but though there were many suspicious circumstances, there was nothing amounting to legal evidence. The same remark will apply to the fourth charge, implying various acts of a corrupt character. The managers of the House of

Commons appear, indeed, to have been sensible that they could not maintain their charges without they were permitted to emancipate themselves from rules of evidence which have been long established, and are universally recognized in English courts of law —a most arrogant and mischievous attempt. If the rules be good, they ought to be maintained in all cases; if evil, they ought to be abandoned; but to maintain them where private individuals are concerned, and relieve the House of Commons from their operation, would be equivalent to saying that where the House of Commons appeared as a prosecutor, it should be at liberty to employ any means, however unjust, to procure conviction. If any difference should be made, it certainly should not be in favour of the House of Commons. Its vast power needs not undue addition, and the party spirit which clings to its acts, even as a public prosecutor, would suggest the propriety of a diminution of ordinary power, rather than the addition of any of an extraordinary character. CHAP. XIII.

The power of impeachment is maintained for the alleged purpose of furthering the ends of justice; but it is clear that it may be exercised for the purpose of oppression, and that whether an intention so to exercise it exist or not, the effect may be produced. It was produced in the case of Hastings. Waving all considerations of his innocence or guilt, it was an intolerable grievance to be kept on trial for seven years. To subject an innocent man to such a proceeding is frightful injustice; to a guilty man,

CHAP. XIII. the anxiety and expense would be no light punishment.

Attaching no greater importance than they deserve to the whining appeals of Hastings,* it is but

* To shew that they are not improperly characterized, one of them is submitted for the judgment of the reader. It was addressed to the House of Peers immediately after the opening of the last article of impeachment which was proceeded upon.—"My Lords, I shall take up but a very few minutes of your time, but what I have to say I hope will be deemed of sufficient importance to justify me in requesting that you will give me so much attention. A charge of having wasted £584,000 is easily made where no means are allowed for answering it. It is not pleasant for me, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, to hear myself accused of crimes, many of them of the most atrocious dye, and all represented in the most shocking colours, and to feel that I never shall be allowed to answer them. In my time of life, in the life of a man already approaching very near to its close, four years of which his reputation is to be traduced and branded in the world, is too much. I never expect to be allowed to come to my defence, nor to hear your lordships' judgment on my trial. I have long been convinced of it, nor has the late resolution of the House of Commons, which I expected to have heard announced to your lordships here, afforded me the least glimpse of hope that the termination of my trial is at all nearer. My Lords, it is now four years complete since I first appeared at your lordships' bar: nor is this all; I came to your bar with a mind sore from another inquisition, in another place, which commenced, if I may be allowed to date it from the impression on my mind, on the day I arrived in this capital, on my return to England, after thirteen years' service. On that day was announced the determination of the House of Commons for arraigning me for the whole of my conduct. I have been now accused for six years; I now approach very near (I do not know whether my recollection fails me) to sixty years of age, and can I waste my life in sitting here from time to time arraigned—not only arraigned, but tortured with invectives of the most virulent kind? I appeal to every man's feelings, whether I have not borne things that many even of your lordships could not have

just to admit that he had great reason to com- CHAP. XIII.
plain. It was alleged, indeed, that the delay was in

borne, and with a patience that nothing but my own innocence could have enabled me to shew. As the House of Commons have declared their resolution, that for the sake of speedy justice (I think that was the term), they had ordered their managers to close their proceedings on the article which has now been opened to your lordships, and to abandon the rest, I now see a prospect which I never saw before, but which it is in your lordships' power alone to realize, of closing this disagreeable situation in which I have been so long placed; and however I may be charged with the error of imprudence, I am sure I shall not be deemed guilty of disrespect to your lordships in the request which I make. That request is, that your lordships will be pleased to grant me that justice which every man in every country in the world, free or otherwise, has a right to; that where he is accused he may defend himself, and may have the judgment of the court on the accusations that are brought against him. I therefore do pray your lordships, notwithstanding the time of the year (I feel the weight of that reflection on my mind)—but I pray your lordships to consider, *not the unimportance of the object before you*, but the magnitude of the precedent, which every man in this country may bring home to his own feelings, of a criminal trial suspended over his head for ever; for in the history of the jurisprudence of this country, I am told (and I have taken some pains to search, and as far as my search has gone it has been verified), there never yet was an instance of a criminal trial that lasted four months except mine; nor even one month, excepting one instance, an instance drawn from a time and situation of this government which I hope will be prevented from ever happening again. My Lords, the request which I have to make to your lordships is, that you will be pleased to continue the session of this court till the proceedings shall be closed, I shall be heard in my defence, and your lordships shall have proceeded to judgment. *My Lords, it is not an acquittal that I desire; that will rest with your lordships, and with your own internal conviction. I desire a defence and I desire a judgment, be that judgment what it will. My Lords, I have bowed, I have humbled myself before this court, and I have been reproached for it. I am not ashamed to bow before an authority to which I owe*

CHAP. XIII.

a great degree attributable to the pertinacity with which his counsel resisted the introduction of matter which in the eye of the law is not evidence. But in this they were exercising an undoubted right, and the charge of occasioning delay may justly be retorted on the managers, for persisting in offering that as evidence which they knew to be inadmissible.*

Hastings survived the termination of his trial more than twenty years; but his days were passed in

submission, and for which I feel respect that excites it as a willing oblation from me. I now again, with all humility, present myself a subject of your justice and humanity. I am not a man of apathy, nor are my powers of endurance equal to the tardy and indefinite operation of parliamentary justice. I feel it as a very cruel lot imposed on me, to be tried by one generation, and, if I live so long, to expect judgment from another; for, my Lords, are all the Lords present before whom I originally was tried? Are not many gone to that place to which we must all go? I am told that there is a difference of more than sixty in the identity of the judges before whom I now stand. My Lords, I pray you to free me from this prosecution by continuing this trial till its close, and pronouncing a judgment during this session: if your lordships can do it, I have a petition to that effect in my hand, which, if it is not irregular, I now wish to deliver to your lordships."—There were many things in this address well and forcibly stated, and the prayer of the applicant was reasonable; but the tone of abject humiliation by which it is pervaded is more creditable to Hastings as an actor than as a man. What a contrast does his conduct at Westminster present to his bearing in Hindostan!

* Every disputed point between the managers and the counsel for Hastings rendered it necessary for the Lords to leave Westminster Hall and return to their usual place of sitting, to deliberate. These constant journeys, from the hall to the chamber of parliament, from the chamber of parliament to the hall, and the multiplied delays thereby occasioned, caused one of the peers to remark, that the judges walked, and the trial stood still.

comparative obscurity, his retirement being only occasionally broken by some feeble attempts to grasp those honours to which he held himself entitled, and which, even to the last hour of a very long life, he does not appear altogether to have despaired of attaining. When the question of the renewal of the Company's powers was, in 1813, under the consideration of the House of Commons, Hastings was called upon to give the house the benefit of his evidence. He was received with marked respect, and on his retirement the members simultaneously rose to render him honour.

No man has been more bitterly reviled, or more extravagantly praised, than Hastings; nearly all who have spoken or written of him have been fierce partizans — the calmness of unbiassed judgment has rarely been brought to the examination of his character. On one point friends and foes must agree—that he was a man of extraordinary talents—that, as far as intellectual qualifications constitute competency, he was eminently competent to the high duties in the discharge of which so large a portion of his life was passed. He was not only able but laborious; his time and thoughts were given to the business of his station without reserve, and almost without intermission. Few of his successors have equalled him in ability—none have surpassed him in industry.

He was among the first to see that England could not maintain her position in India as an isolated power. He was among the first to discern the

CHAP. XIII. necessity of the British government forming alliances with the native states, and gradually advancing to that commanding situation which it has since attained. These views were in his time greatly unpopular in England; but experience, both evil and good, has since proved their soundness.

Hastings, too, did much to reform the internal administration of the British provinces. He found the country suffering from the consequences of a series of revolutions and a succession of weak governments. The revenue and judicial establishments were utterly ineffective, and he had to make provisions for their reform. He did not render them perfect, nor even reasonably good, but he gave them some degree of efficiency, and his labours formed the ground-work on which subsequent endeavours for their improvement have been based.

Hastings was sincerely desirous of promoting the prosperity of the country which he governed, and upholding the interests of those whom he served. But his moral constitution was defective, and the means by which he sought to promote worthy and laudable objects were often utterly indefensible. If the state wanted money, he appears to have thought himself at liberty to supply the want without inquiring as to the justice of the modes resorted to. His whole policy was based on the loosest expediency, and he never suffered himself to be fettered by a principle for a moment after it was convenient to cast it aside. With a mind of extraordinary power, he seems to have been incapable of under-

standing the plainest obligations of justice, and the defects of his moral judgment were not corrected by any delicacy of feeling. His sympathies were weak. Stately, cold, and artificial, he manifested little of human passion, except in its darker forms.* His hatred was intense, and its violence was aggravated by the lofty opinion which he entertained of himself. He had a right to think of himself highly; but no man can be justified in entertaining that contempt for the opinion of his fellow-men which he cherished, and which was manifested in so many acts of his life.† CHAP. XIII.

* His character is strikingly illustrated by the large collection of his private letters which has lately appeared. Whatever the subject, they are written in the style of despatches—affording a perfect contrast in this respect to the familiar letters of Clive.

† The private character of Hastings does not fall within the province of history; but the circumstances of his second marriage so strongly corroborate the opinion expressed in the text, that a reference to them may be excused. To avoid the imputation of exaggerating the facts, they shall be related in the language of his indulgent biographer. It is necessary to premise, that they occurred on Hastings's voyage to Madras, when appointed to a seat in council there. Prior to his proceeding to Bengal as governor-general, "Mr. Hastings found among his fellow-passengers in the Duke of Grafton two individuals, with whom he soon entered into terms of familiar intercourse. These were Baron Adam Carl Imhoff, a native of Franconia in Germany, a man of good family, though reduced in his circumstances, who was going out to Madras for the purpose of following there the profession of a portrait painter, and his lady, a person of singularly attractive manners, of a very engaging figure, and a mind highly cultivated. * * * * It so happened, that between this gifted young person and her husband there was no conformity at all, either of tastes or of disposition. * * * * * * Between the Baroness Imhoff, such as I have described her, the wife of one whom she

CHAP. XIII. An absurd love of mystery for its own sake—a powerful tendency to dissemble his thoughts and purposes, and appear what he was not—a perverse fondness for accomplishing his purposes by indirect and crooked means, even when no perceivable advantage could be gained by their use—these were not

had never loved, and Mr. Hastings, one of the most fascinating as well as chivalrous men of his day, it would have been strange if a friendship had failed to arise, which gradually, and to themselves perhaps unconsciously, took from day to day a deeper colouring; for she discovered in him all the qualities, the absence of which hindered her from giving her heart where she had bestowed her hand, while he found in her more than the realization of the brightest dream which his imagination had ever ventured to form. * * * * * * They were both too high-minded to inflict on a husband an injury which never can be repaired; but they were not firm enough to hold out against the strong temptations which the laws of Protestant Germany, in reference to the marriage contract, cast in their way. Mr. and Mrs. Imhoff lived together with good repute a whole year in Madras. They acted upon the same wise and judicious plan after they followed Mr. Hastings to Bengal. Yet all this while a suit was going forward in the proper courts of Franconia for a divorce. The divorce was obtained after much delay; the Baroness Imhoff became Mrs. Hastings, and the Baron returned to his native country a richer man than he ever could have hoped to become by portrait painting."—Gleig's Memoirs of Hastings, vol. i. pages 163 to 166. On this story comment must be needless. The lady was sold by her first husband, and bought by her second. Hastings could not but know in what light such a transaction would be regarded in his own country, where the state of feelings on such matters differs from that which is represented as prevailing in "Protestant Germany;" but he either despised the public opinion, which he must have felt to be against him, or thought himself too elevated to be reached by it. Hastings was at this time nearly forty years of age, and consequently has no claim to escape censure on the plea of youth. He had also been previously married.

less striking, and scarcely less unamiable parts of his nature. In conclusion, it may be said that in the character of Hastings we may discern much to be admired—much to be condemned—nothing to be loved.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAP. XIV. WHEN Hastings resigned the government of Bengal, the next member of council was Mr. John Macpherson,* formerly agent to the Nabob of Arcot, in which character he had been received some years before by the Duke of Grafton, then prime minister. Mr. Macpherson, it will be recollected, had at that time given some advice to the minister too agreeable to be refused.† The gratitude of the nobleman induced him to recommend the Nabob's agent to the favour of the Court of Directors of the East-India Company, and in consequence he was appointed a writer on the Madras establishment. By some means not explained, the governor of Madras, Lord Pigot, obtained a copy of a memorial, believed to have been transmitted to the Nabob of Arcot by Mr. Macpherson, recounting various services rendered to the prince in England. It being deemed improper that such a paper should be addressed to a native prince by a servant of the British government, an inquiry into the alleged authorship took place. Mr. Macpherson's answer was evasive: the governor moved that he should be dismissed the service, and the motion was carried.

* Mr. Wheler was dead.

† See pages 19 to 26.

At home Mr. Macpherson's offence was regarded with greater leniency, and a case was submitted to the Company's standing counsel, requiring his opinion, whether he could be restored by a mere majority of the Court of Directors only; or whether, in conformity with the provisions of an existing act of parliament with regard to dismissed servants, the concurrence of three-fourths of the directors and three-fourths of the proprietors would be necessary for his restoration. The opinion of the Company's counsel was to the effect that the dismissal was informal, but that, nevertheless, Mr. Macpherson could not be restored by the vote of a simple majority of the Court of Directors; and he added, "it is worth while considering, if Mr. Macpherson should be restored, whether he is a proper person to be continued in the Company's service. He had, in my opinion, too much connection with the Nabob of Arcot; and when the Company's interest and the Nabob's are affected, as they will often happen, they will greatly disturb a man of honour and integrity." This opinion seems not to have been satisfactory, for, about a month after its delivery, another was obtained from the solicitor-general,* determining that Mr. Macpherson was still in the Company's service, the dismissal having been irregular. Upon this opinion the majority of the Court of Directors resolved to act, and the government of Madras was apprized that Mr. Macpherson remained in the Com-

* Mr. Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough, Lord Chancellor of England.

CHAP. XIV. pany's service with his proper standing; but it was added, "as his behaviour was disrespectful to your board, and in other respects very reprehensible, we direct that you give him a severe reprimand, and acquaint him that a like conduct will meet with a severer punishment."

The reprimand was never received, nor the danger of the severer punishment incurred. Mr. Macpherson was declared still in the service; but either he evinced no anxiety to enjoy the emoluments thus re-opened to him, or his masters hesitated to complete the measure of their indulgence by sanctioning his return to his presidency. Mr. Macpherson remained in England three years and a half, how engaged it is unnecessary to inquire. At the end of that period he was appointed a member of the council, not of Madras, to which presidency he belonged, but of Bengal, to supply the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Barwell. The appointment, under the existing state of the law, required the confirmation of the Crown: this was granted without objection, and the agent of Mahomet Ali thus became the coadjutor, and eventually the successor, of Warren Hastings.

At this time, when the eyes of all political parties were intently fixed on India, such an appointment was not likely to pass without notice. The select committee of the House of Commons instituted an inquiry into the facts, and honoured Mr. Macpherson with an elaborate report of some length, solely devoted to the illustration of his history. Mr. Mac-

pherson was young in the Company's service; but this objection to his appointment was of comparatively trifling importance. His previous conduct ought to have been regarded as an insuperable obstacle to his admission into the service at all, and his selection, by the body against whose rights and interests he had conspired for a seat in the supreme council with a chance of eventual succession to the office of governor-general, is one of those extraordinary facts which secret history alone can adequately explain. The chairman and deputy chairman of the Company were examined before the select committee, but with little advantage to the object which the committee had in view. To questions relating to the peculiar motives which had dictated the appointment, they were dumb. It is said that, when Mr. Macpherson returned to England from Madras, he afforded secret information respecting the designs of France which was highly useful, and which led, in the succeeding war, to the early and easy capture of Pondicherry. This service undoubtedly merited reward; but if it could not be avowed as the ground of the appointment, some mode of acknowledgment less open to suspicion ought to have been found. Upon the case, as related in the report of the select committee, opinions could scarcely differ. The appointment appeared utterly indefensible, and no attempt was made to defend it.

While the means by which Mr. Macpherson first raised himself to distinction cannot be too severely condemned, it is justly due to him to state that his

CHAP. XIV. exercise of the chief power in India was entitled to much praise. He applied himself vigorously to enforce necessary reforms, and to restore the credit of the Company's government. To him, in a great degree, belongs the merit of introducing order and regularity into the administration of the finances of India, which previously received little more attention than was necessary to provide for the exigencies of the passing hour. His character appears to have been that of an able and unscrupulous man—of one caring little in whose service his talents were exercised so that they were duly rewarded, but who left his employers, whoever they might be, no ground for complaint, that the interests entrusted to him had suffered either through incapacity or negligence.

During the administration of Mr. Macpherson Lord Macartney arrived at Calcutta from Madras, the government of which presidency he had recently resigned. His principal object in proceeding to Bengal was, to endeavour, by personal representation, to impress upon the superior government a sense of the difficulties in which that of Madras would be placed, in consequence of the orders from England, directing the restoration of the assignment granted by the Nabob of Arcot.* While in Calcutta, he received a despatch, announcing his

* These orders were the result of the intrigues of Mr. Paul Benfield, who was then in India, assiduously cultivating his interests with the Nabob of Arcot, and writing letters in the Nabob's name, filled with abuse of Lord Macartney. Hastings, who cordially hated Lord Macartney, seems to have derived much satisfaction from such of these epistles as were addressed to him. The

appointment as governor-general of Bengal. The distinction was flattering, as it had not been soli- CHAP. X.

mode in which they were manufactured is explained in a despatch, addressed by the governor and council of Fort St. George to the governor and council of Bengal, 25th May, 1783. They say, "Mr. Benfield, to secure the permanency of his power and the perfection of his schemes, thought it necessary to render the Nabob an absolute stranger to the state of his affairs. He assured his highness that full justice was not done to the strength of his sentiments and the keenness of his attacks, in the translations that were made by the Company's servants from the original Persian of his letters; he therefore proposed to him that they should, in future, be transmitted in English. Of the English language or writing his highness or the Ameer [the Nabob's second son] cannot read one word; though the latter can converse in it with sufficient fluency. The Persian language, as the language of the Mahometan conquerors and of the court of Delhi, as an appendage or signal of authority, was at all times particularly affected by the Nabob. It is the language of all acts of state and all public transactions among the Mussulman chiefs of Hindostan. The Nabob was thought to have gained no inconsiderable point in procuring the correspondence from our predecessors to the rajah of Tanjore to be changed from the Mahratta language, which the Hindoo prince understands, to the Persian, which he disclaims understanding. To force the rajah to the Nabob's language was gratifying the latter with a new species of subserviency. He had formerly contended, with considerable anxiety and, it was thought, no inconsiderable cost, for particular forms of address to be used towards him in that language; but all of a sudden, in favour of Mr. Benfield, he quits his former affections, his habits, his knowledge, his curiosity, the increasing mistrust of age, to throw himself on the generous candour, the faithful interpretation, the grateful return, and eloquent organ of Mr. Benfield. Mr. Benfield relates and reads what he pleases to his excellency the Ameer-al-Omrah: his excellency communicates with the Nabob, his father, in the language the latter understands. Through two channels so pure the truth must arrive at the Nabob in perfect refinement. Through this double trust his highness receives whatever impression it may be expedient to

CHAP. XIV. cited; it was the more flattering as Lord Macartney was unconnected with the political party then in power,* and had not been supposed to possess any large share of their confidence. The honour was, however, declined, though, as may be gathered from the statement of his lordship's biographer, not without some anticipation of its future enjoyment. The writer observes, "he had many and strong reasons for declining at this time to take upon himself the government of Bengal. The ill state of his health, broken down by the fatigues and vexations which he had undergone in his late government, required a speedy removal to his native climate. The general situation of affairs in India likewise pointed out to him the propriety, and indeed the necessity, of submitting to his Majesty's ministers certain regulations which he considered indispensable for the salvation of this part of the empire, and of laying before them those conditions on which only he felt himself able to fulfil the purposes of his appointment

make on him. He thus is surrounded on every side. He is totally at their mercy, to believe what is not true and to subscribe to what he does not mean. There is no system so new, so foreign to his intentions, that they may not pursue in his name, without possibility of detection; for they are cautious of who approach him, and have thought prudent to decline for him the visits of the governor, even upon the usual solemn and acceptable occasion of delivering to his highness the Company's letters. Such is the complete ascendancy gained by Mr. Benfield!" Mr. Benfield was a great artist, but similar means of preying on native princes have often been adopted by unprincipled Europeans, though rarely, perhaps, used with equal skill, or attended by equal success.

* That of Mr. Pitt.

with advantage to the public and reputation to himself. Other circumstances, which applied peculiarly to himself, rendered every precaution on his part, if not necessary, at least expedient."* These circumstances appear to have been his dislike or distrust of the associates with whom, if he had accepted the office of governor-general, he would have been obliged to act; and, under the influence of all these motives, Lord Macartney determined to leave Mr. Macpherson in continued possession of the seat of power. On his lordship's arrival in England, he entered into immediate communication with the chairman and deputy chairman of the East-India Company, with the view, as it would appear, of preparing the way for his appointment to the office of governor-general, under conditions which would remove his previous objections to accepting it. Lord Macartney alleged that the necessary subordination of the military to the civil authority was not sufficiently provided for; he represented that great abuses still existed in the civil service, and complained especially of the power possessed by the majority of council of thwarting the designs of the governor-general.† To the parties then exercising

* Barrow's Life of Lord Macartney, vol. i. page 305.

† The inconvenience arising from this source was remedied by an act passed in the year of Lord Macartney's arrival in England, and probably in consequence of his lordship's representations. The 26 Geo. 3, cap. 16, gave to the governor-general and the governors of the subordinate presidencies the power of performing, without the concurrence of a majority of council, any act which would have been lawful with such concurrence, excepting the exercise of judicial or legislative authority, or the imposition

CHAP. XIV. the highest civil and military authority in Bengal he had personal objections, which he thought rendered it inexpedient that they should be members of a government of which he was to be the head. The views of Lord Macartney on these points having been communicated to the ministers of the Crown, he was invited to an interview with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. No important difference appears to have existed on the points which had been previously discussed with the chairman and deputy chairman of the Company, but a difficulty arose from Lord Macartney intimating that it would be necessary, for his own reputation and the benefit of the public service, that he should receive some distinguished mark of the favour of the Crown, and that he had hoped that Mr. Pitt had been prepared to anticipate the expression of his desire for an English peerage.* This desire the minister was not willing to gratify; and three days after the conference, Lord Cornwallis was appointed governor-general of Bengal. This nobleman had some years before been referred to by name in the House of Commons, as eminently fitted for the situation.†

of any tax or duty. The act by which this power was first given has been repealed, but the power has been continued by subsequent enactments and still exists.

* Lord Macartney being an Irish peer.

† By Mr. Dundas, to whose influence, as president of the Board of Commissioners, the appointment may be attributed. Lord Macartney appeared no more on the field of Indian politics, but his proceedings as governor of Madras led to his being engaged in a duel in this country with General Stuart, whom he had forcibly removed from the command of the army and sent home under arrest. The

Lord Cornwallis found in the administration of the Bengal government much that required immediate correction. Hastings had made some provision for the maintenance of the public peace, and

meeting was sought by General Stuart, and the ground of it was an alleged misrepresentation contained in a despatch forwarded from Madras to the Court of Directors, and signed by Lord Macartney and the other members of the government. In that despatch it was stated that, when General Stuart was removed from the command of the army, Sir John Burgoyne acknowledged to the governor that he was desired by the general to feign compliance with the wishes of government that he (Sir John Burgoyne) should accept the command, but added, that he disdained such a course, and therefore gave notice that he should obey General Stuart's orders. Sir John Burgoyne subsequently denied having made any such statement as to General Stuart; and several persons present at the conversations between the governor and Sir John Burgoyne affirmed that they had not heard it. Lord Macartney insisted that it had been made, and referred to Sir George Staunton as remembering it. Captain Cole, an officer in the King's service, also testified that he had heard Sir John Burgoyne make a similar statement in another place. It is neither easy nor important to determine on the balance of evidence; if numbers were to decide, the verdict must pass against Lord Macartney. At the hostile meeting to which the dispute led, his lordship was wounded in the shoulder. General Stuart not thinking (as is to be presumed) the wound sufficiently severe to soothe his injured feelings, expressed much anxiety that his lordship should endeavour to fire another pistol, and Lord Macartney, according to the statement of the seconds, intimated that it would give him pleasure to gratify the general: but the seconds would not permit it, and the affair thereupon terminated. It was believed that General Stuart meditated renewing the dispute at a future time, but further proceedings were stopped by a special injunction from the sovereign.

This was not the only business of the like character in which Lord Macartney was engaged. In India, he had been involved in a dispute with Mr. Sadleir, a member of the government, and the senior of the three commissioners employed in negotiating the

CHAP. XIV. for the management of the revenue, but corruption and abuse pervaded every department of the state. Some of the existing evils Hastings had perhaps little inclination to correct. As an instance, may be mentioned, the prevailing practice of gratifying followers and dependents by lucrative agencies, which was a mode of purchasing friends and supporters too convenient to be despised by a man who needed all the strength which he could enlist in his service to stem the current of opposition which not unfrequently set against him in India, and shield him from the dangers which he was conscious awaited him at home. When no such motives interposed, the evils, which were allowed to increase and multiply, derived impunity, not from the disinclination of Hastings to correct them, but from his want of power or of opportunity. Placed, during a great part of his career as governor-general, in conflict with his colleagues, engaged in vast and wide-spread military operations requiring constant thought and giving rise to constant anxiety, it is rather surprising that he should have found time to do any thing for the improvement of the internal administration of

treaty with Tippoo Sultan. Mr. Sadleir, it was alleged, had given his consent to a particular act of the government—he denied it, and the governor, whose command of temper on this occasion does not appear entitled to much praise, repelled Mr. Sadleir's assertion by the strongest expression in which an imputation of falsehood can be conveyed. A challenge from the insulted party was the consequence; and in the meeting which followed, Lord Macartney was slightly wounded in the left side. To a duel under such circumstances, the observations which have been made on that between Hastings and Francis strictly apply.

the country, than that he should not have done more or better. The government of Lord Cornwallis was not free from the distractions of war, but in one respect his position had a decided advantage over that of Hastings. The unavoidable difficulties of administering the affairs of the country were not aggravated by the infusion of faction. In combating with the evils, which circumstances had allowed to attain a gigantic stature, he feared no unreasonable opposition either at the council board or at home. The earlier years of his administration being undisturbed by war, opportunity was found for considering such changes as appeared to be necessary in the administrative system of the country. Whether or not these were in every instance judiciously effected, has been matter of debate. Some notice will be taken of the more important of them before the history of the government of Lord Cornwallis is brought to a close. CHAP. XIV.

Among the external relations of the Company's government, those subsisting with Oude soon claimed Lord Cornwallis's attention. The ever unsatisfactory state of that unhappy country was certain, indeed, of furnishing subject of appeal to a new governor-general. Lord Cornwallis made some modifications in the existing arrangements, but declined to comply with the Vizier's request for the withdrawal of part of the English force stationed for the protection of his dominions. The relation now established between the two states was that which has since been so widely extended—a sub-

CHAP. XIV. sidiary alliance; and its nature is thus described by the governor-general:—"We undertake the defence of his country; and, in return, he agrees to defray the real expenses incurred by an engagement of so much value to himself. The internal administration of his affairs is left to his exclusive management."

With Nizam Ali there were some differences to be adjusted, and these not unattended by difficulties. Basalat Jung, the brother of the Nizam, who, it will be recollected, had a life interest in Guntoor, one of the Northern Circars, was dead, but Guntoor had not been surrendered to the English, to whom the reversion belonged, though possession had been demanded. It remained for Lord Cornwallis to repeat and enforce the demand. An agent of the British government was accordingly dispatched to the court of the Nizam; and that his mission might want no auxiliary to success, a military force was put in motion in the direction of the circar claimed. Nizam Ali made little opposition to the demand for its transfer, and this part of the negotiation was brought to a conclusion with greater ease than was expected. But so long as the circar had been withheld from the English, after the event which gave them a claim to possession, they had neglected to pay the Nizam's peshcush, or tribute, while he, for the same period, had received the revenues of Guntoor. To settle these accounts, one of the ministers of the Nizam proceeded to Calcutta. Besides the ostensible motive for his

journey, there was another—the desire of concluding such engagements with the English as should secure their aid, in case the Nizam should be attacked either by Tippoo Sultan or the Mahrattas. He had not long before been engaged, in conjunction with the Mahrattas, in war with Tippoo Sultan,* but had little cause to be proud of his success. Peace had been restored, and Nizam Ali proposed an indissoluble union between the Sultan and himself. The answer of Tippoo was favourable, but he required that the connection should be cemented by intermarriage between the families. The pride of Nizam Ali recoiled from this proposal, and thus the effect of his overture for a political alliance tended to alienate rather than unite the two great Mahometan powers of the south of India. Instead of conciliating the friendship of Tippoo, he felt that he had increased the enmity of that potentate. His increased danger added to his ardour for an English alliance, but the manacles which bound the hands of Lord Cornwallis seemed to preclude him from compliance. The English in India had been involved in some unjust wars, and with that headlong wilfulness with which popular opinion tends to rush to extremes, the English parliament and the English people seem to have concluded that every war

* Had Hastings remained in India with the power to give effect to his wishes, the English would probably have been a party to this confederacy. Pacific policy was, however, the fashion of the day, and Lord Cornwallis took extraordinary pains to make known that the government would enter into no such connection.

CHAP. XIV. waged by Europeans in India must be unjust. Parliamentary speeches, parliamentary resolutions, and parliamentary reports, denounced the pursuit of conquest, and thus far no objection can be taken to the views which they embodied. But when those who thus cheaply earned popular applause proceeded to deprive Indian statesmen of the power of effectually serving their country and maintaining the security of its dependencies, they manifested either a total ignorance of the position of the British nation in India, or a culpable disregard of its interests. By an Act of Parliament, passed not long before the departure of Lord Cornwallis for his government,* after reciting that "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy of this nation," it was declared that it should not be lawful for the governor-general and council, without the express command and authority of the Court of Directors or the Secret Committee, to declare war, or commence hostilities, or enter into treaty for making war, or guaranteeing the possessions of any country powers or chiefs, except in cases where hostilities should actually have been commenced, or preparations made for their commencement against the British nation in India, or some power or state whose territories the Company were bound to defend. This enactment seemed to preclude the gratification of Nizam Ali by any new engagements, and what were those actually subsisting

* 24 Geo. 3, cap. 25 : Mr. Pitt's India Act.

between the two states it was by no means an easy task to determine. In 1768 the English government had concluded a treaty with Nizam Ali, in which they accepted from that prince the dewanny of part of Hyder Ali's dominions, subject to their conquest, and the payment of a certain amount of tribute.* But in the following year they had negotiated with Hyder Ali as the lawful master of the territories which he governed, and in that character had concluded a treaty with him;† and fifteen years afterwards they had, in like manner, recognized the claims of Hyder Ali's son, Tippoo Sultan.‡ Did these engagements with the successive rulers of Mysore nullify their former agreement with Nizam Ali, which acknowledged his right to dispose of Hyder Ali's dominions, and accepted a free gift of them? Lord Cornwallis decided that they did not—that the treaty of 1768 was yet in force. What then became of the arrangements with Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan? The English might abandon their own claims to the dewanny, but they could not abandon those of Nizam Ali to the sovereignty, if any claim he had. The difficulty was attempted to be met by a declaration that circumstances had totally precluded the execution of the article relating to the dewanny, and a promise that if it should happen that the Company, with the Nizam's assistance, should gain possession of the country, the claims of that prince should be respected, as well as

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* See vol. i. page 554. † See vol. i. page 573.
‡ See page 290.

CHAP. XIV. the right of the Mahrattas to *chout;* for this the British government, by the treaty of 1768, undertook to pay, although the Mahrattas were no parties to the treaty. The governor-general thus recognized the cotemporary operation of two treaties, to both of which the Company was a party; one acknowledging the right of Tippoo Sultan to certain territories, the other transferring those territories to the English.

This was not all. By the treaty with the Nizam, the English were bound to furnish that prince with a certain amount of military force. An explanation of this article was afforded by the governor-general, in which it was declared that the stipulated assistance should be granted whenever the Nizam might apply for it; but it was not to be employed against any powers in alliance with the Company. To guard against mistake, these favoured allies were named, and the list comprehended every power of any importance in the south of India except one—the exception was Tippoo Sultan. The views of that restless and unprincipled tyrant afforded just ground for apprehension, but the governor-general was precluded by Act of Parliament from entering into any treaty which should place the British government in a condition to contend with him effectually. An evasion was therefore resorted to. It was thought desirable to conciliate the Nizam, and secure his co-operation as an ally; and to attain this object, an old treaty, portions of which had been virtually rescinded by the treaties made by the English with

Hyder Ali and Tippoo, was declared still to be in full operation, and a letter was written to the Nizam, confirming and explaining it. This letter, it was explicitly declared, was to be equally binding as a treaty. If it had been an object to devise means to embarrass the British government in India, to divest it of the power of defending the Company's possessions, or compel a recourse to pitiful subterfuges to avert their loss, no means more efficient could have been found than the ill-considered and absurd enactment by which the governor-general was required to defer preparation for war till preparation would probably be vain. In addressing the resident at Poona, a few months after the transmission of his letter to the Nizam, Lord Cornwallis said, "Some considerable advantages have no doubt been experienced by the system of neutrality which the legislature required of the governments of this country, but it has, at the same time, been attended with the unavoidable inconvenience of our being constantly exposed to the necessity of commencing a war without having previously secured the assistance of efficient allies." In reference to the conduct of Lord Cornwallis on this occasion, Colonel Wilks remarks, that "it is highly instructive to observe a statesman, justly extolled for moderate and pacific dispositions, thus indirectly violating a law enacted for the enforcement of these virtues, by entering into a very intelligible offensive alliance, which, although the effective revival of the abrogated conditions of an old treaty, was certainly

CHAP. XIV. neither a declaration of war, nor that technical instrument named a treaty for making war, executed subsequently to the prohibiting Act of Parliament."* "The desire, indeed, of not offending against the letter of the Act of Parliament," says Sir John Malcolm, "would appear, on this occasion, to have led to a trespass on its spirit by the revival of an offensive alliance against Tippoo Sultan, for such the treaty of 1768 undoubtedly was." "There is no person," he subsequently observes, "acquainted with the nature of the times in which this engagement"—the engagement with the Nizam—"was formed, but must be sensible that every measure of precautionary policy was then necessary on the part of the British government to counteract and frustrate the ambitious designs of Tippoo Sultan; but what has been stated will shew that the literal construction of the restrictions of the Act of Parliament had, upon this occasion, the effect of making the governor-general pursue a course which was perhaps not only questionable in point of faith, but which must have been more offensive to Tippoo Sultan, and more calculated to produce a war with that prince than an avowed contract of a defensive engagement, framed for the express and legitimate purpose of limiting his inordinate ambition."† Such were some of the effects of legislating for India, in a spirit which could discern nothing but the lust

* Sketches, vol. iii. page 38.

† Sketch of the Political History of India, ed. 1811, pages 66, 68, 69.

of conquest in Englishmen, nothing but justice, moderation, and patient endurance in the native princes of India.

The exception of Tippoo Sultan from the number of princes against whom the English battalions furnished to the Nizam were not to act, marked the point from which the governor-general apprehended danger. The course of events proved that the apprehension was not groundless. By the treaty of 1784, the peace concluded with Tippoo Sultan was to extend, not to the English alone, but to their allies; and among these the Rajah of Travancore was specially named. Tippoo Sultan, however, meditated the conquest or dismemberment of Travancore; and, to save appearances, made repeated attempts to attain his purpose through the instrumentality of others. He had endeavoured to prevail on the Zamorin of Calicut to invade Travancore, in prosecution of some antiquated claims; and would probably have succeeded, had he not offended the Hindoo prince by his furious zeal for making compulsory proselytes to the Mahometan faith. He next sought the assistance of the Rajah of Cochin, whom he instigated to reclaim the territory on which the lines of Travancore were formed. These lines had been constructed principally upon a strip of land ceded many years before by the Rajah of Cochin to the Rajah of Travancore, in compensation for assistance rendered by the latter prince in resisting an invasion of the territories of the former by the Zamorin of Calicut. Alarmed by the intelligence of

CHAP. XIV. the hostile views of Tippoo Sultan, the Rajah of Travancore applied to the government of Madras for assistance; and Sir Archibald Campbell, who had succeeded Lord Macartney as the head of that presidency, promptly granted it. He at the same time addressed a representation to Tippoo Sultan, warning him that any act of aggression upon Travancore would be regarded by the English government as a violation of the treaty of 1784, and equivalent to a declaration of war against that government. To this Tippoo responded by professing a desire to maintain relations of amity with the English state. His acts, however, did not correspond with his professions; for a few months afterwards he commenced his march in the direction of Travancore, with a force of about thirty-five thousand men.

On an estuary at one extremity of the lines of Travancore were situate two forts belonging to the Dutch, named Cranganore and Ayacottah. On the approach of Tippoo, the Dutch, under the provisions of a treaty of long standing, called upon the Rajah of Travancore to assist them in the defence of these places. With this requisition he was ready to comply; but Mr. Hollond, who by the departure of Sir Archibald Campbell had become acting governor of Madras, informed the rajah that the English battalions could not be permitted to be employed, except upon such parts of the line of defence as actually belonged to Travancore. To overcome this difficulty, the rajah resumed a negotiation, which had been commenced some time before, for the purchase of

the two forts from the Dutch, and a bargain was concluded. Against this transfer Tippoo Sultan remonstrated; alleging that the Dutch had no right to sell the forts, inasmuch as they were but tributaries to the Rajah of Cochin, who was himself the tributary of Tippoo, and that consequently they had assumed the right of alienating part of the possessions of Mysore. Mr. Hollond appears to have yielded a very willing ear to the representations of Tippoo Sultan; he condemned the purchase, and encouraged the Sultan to expect that the places would be restored. The assertions of the Mysorean prince were, however, monstrous falsehoods. The Dutch had originally obtained the disputed possessions by conquest from the Portuguese; they had held them for more than a century; they had never paid tribute to the Rajah of Cochin, or acknowledged his superiority; and the dependence of that prince upon Mysore, so far from preceding the acquisitions of the Dutch, had its origin in the conquest of Hyder Ali, and had not continued more than twelve years. The right of the Dutch to sell, it was reported and believed, had also been recognized by the man who now impugned it. Tippoo Sultan, it was alleged, had offered to become a purchaser; and had the Rajah of Travancore delayed the completion of the treaty, his enemy, it was probable, would in this way have possessed himself of increased means for his destruction.

Tippoo found various other grounds of complaint, which were the subject of long and fruitless discussion.

CHAP. XIV. The English government proposed the appointment of commissioners for the investigation of the points of dispute; but Tippoo Sultan had resolved to submit the question to a different and more decisive arbitration. He had for some time been gradually approaching the lines, part of which formed the principal subject of dispute. On the night of the 28th
A. D. 1789. of December, 1789, he marched to attack them, and gained a considerable extent of rampart. The Travancore troops retreated before him; but his leading corps having suffered severely, an attempt was made to relieve it by another. Before this movement was completed, the fire of a party of about twenty men, posted under a thick cover, fell heavily on the corps about to be relieved, and killed the commanding officer. The whole were immediately thrown into inextricable disorder, and rushing wildly back upon the corps advancing to their relief, threw them also into confusion.

Panic now became general; and the living torrent was borne on to a ditch, over which some of the fugitives leaped, while others were forced into it by the resistless masses which pressed on them from behind. The bodies of these formed a road, over which their comrades passed, and thus miserably did numbers of Tippoo's troops perish. The Sultan was thrown down in the struggle—the bearers of his palanquin trampled to death—himself rescued from the same fate only by the vigorous exertions of some active and faithful followers, and this not until he had received injuries from

the effects of which he occasionally suffered till his death.

Contemplating the probability of war, Lord Cornwallis had instructed the Madras government to be prepared for it. The instruction was disregarded; and even after the attack on the lines of Travancore, the same course was pursued, with alleged reference to economy. The value of this motive was duly appreciated by Lord Cornwallis. Referring to it at a period when the governor guilty of this inexplicable folly had no longer the power of doing good or harm, he said, "So far am I from giving credit to the late government for economy in not making the necessary preparations for war, according to the positive orders of the supreme government, after having received the most gross insults that could be offered to any nation, I think it very possible that every cash* of that ill-judged saving may cost to the Company a crore of rupees." Another distinguished authority, Sir Thomas Munro, then a subaltern in the Madras army and a very young man, but manifesting the germs of that talent and judgment which subsequently raised him to rank and power, passed a similar sentence upon the ill-judged parsimony of the Madras government. In a private letter written at this period, he says, "It will require some time to assemble an army able to face the enemy, and before such an army can be put in motion Tippoo may be in actual possession of Travancore and all

* A Madras copper coin of inconsiderable value.

CHAP. XIV. the southern countries. We have derived but little benefit from experience and misfortune. The year 1790 now sees us as unprepared as the year 1780 did for war." "We shall commence the war," he subsequently observes, "under the disadvantage of a want of magazines, for we have none at present but at Madras. Since the conclusion of the late war we have acted as if we had been to enjoy a perpetual peace. The distresses and difficulties which we then encountered from the want of them has not cured us of the narrow policy of preferring a present small saving to a certain though future great and essential advantage." The same miserable policy which had disgraced the Madras government before the attack of Tippoo on the lines of Travancore, continued to be pursued after that event. Towards Tippoo they maintained a friendly, and even obsequious deportment; and, instead of making any endeavour to remedy the evils resulting from their past errors, they vigorously contested the propriety of the views entertained in Bengal, and defended the right of Tippoo to restrain the sale of the Dutch fortresses. Lord Cornwallis was about to proceed himself to assume the administration of the government of Madras, but the supercession of Mr. Hollond by the arrival of General Medows, recently appointed governor, led to the postponement of his visit.

The British government must now be regarded as at war with Tippoo Sultan. The actual commencement of hostilities relieved them from the difficulty

imposed on them by the law, which, though it forbade the government to prepare for war, did not proceed so far in absurdity as to restrain them from seeking the means of carrying it on when actually commenced. The ridiculous pretence of upholding the engagements concluded with Nizam Ali in 1768 was now dropped, and a new treaty of offensive and defensive alliance concluded with him. A similar treaty was made with the Peishwa. The accession of both powers to the alliance was accelerated by the expectation of recovering from Tippoo the possessions of which they had been deprived by himself and his father.

Before these arrangements were completed, a British army, under the command of the governor of Madras, General Medows, of about fifteen thousand men, formed into six brigades, was assembled on the plains of Trichinopoly. There, on the 24th of May, it was joined by the governor, who, on A. D. 1790. the 26th, marched in the direction of Caroor, the nearest frontier post of the enemy. General Medows, some time before, had addressed a formal letter to Tippoo Sultan, announcing his arrival and assumption of the office of governor of Madras. The answer of the Mysorean prince was not received until the general was on his march. Its tone was greatly subdued in comparison with that of the Sultan's communications with Mr. Hollond. In answer to the proposal of the latter for appointing commissioners to settle the matters in dispute with regard to Travancore, Tippoo had declared that he had him-

CHAP. XIV. self ascertained the facts, and that there was no need of commissioners; but, he added, that, nevertheless, if Mr. Hollond wished it, he might send commissioners "to the presence." It was now the lot of Tippoo to make a similar offer to the English governor. In his letter to General Medows, after congratulating that officer on his arrival and appointment to the government, he remarked with a tone of concern, that, "notwithstanding the bonds of friendship" were "firmly established, in consequence of the intervention in certain necessary and important concerns, and the representations, contrary to the fact, of certain short-sighted persons to" the governor, they had "caused an army to be assembled on both sides. As this event is improper," continued the Sultan, "among those who are mutually at friendship, I therefore wish, in order to clear it up and to have certain important matters represented, to send to you a person of dignity, together with some other persons, that the vakeel of the circar, having arrived with you, may explain the whole circumstances to you, and that the dust which has obscured your upright mind may be removed." The answer of General Medows was short and decisive. Its purport was, that the English, equally incapable of offering an insult and of submitting to one, had always looked upon war as declared from the moment of the attack upon their ally, the Rajah of Travancore, and upon that issue the dispute now rested. The Sultan received the answer of the governor at Coimbatore, and as soon as it reached

him, he retired with his main army to his capital, Seringapatam.* He had provoked war without being prepared to meet it. He had calculated on passing the lines of Travancore with ease, and then overrunning the country. After his unexpected failure, the obsequiousness of the government of Madras had led him to believe that he was still an object of dread, and his tone rose proportionately in self-confidence and haughtiness. The assembling of the English army, and the decisive conduct of General Medows, shewed him that the new governor was ready to assert with the sword the rights of his country and those of its allies; and Tippoo Sultan, having tried to gain some advantage by procrastination, acknowledged his weakness by a retreat, which left a large tract of country almost undefended. All this was highly characteristic of Tippoo Sultan. His father, Hyder Ali, was master of his passions, and to this cause his success is mainly to be ascribed. Tippoo, on the contrary, was the slave of his passions. Intoxicated with pride, he seems, on many occasions, to have thought that he had only to will in order to obtain. Reverses produced on him their usual bitter effects, but unaccompanied by any portion of that wholesome change of spirit which, in better natures, they have a tendency to effect. Unaffected by misfortune, except during its actual pressure, Tippoo Sultan recovered from it only to

* The pride or caprice of Tippoo had led him not only to abandon but to destroy Mysore, the ancient capital of the country bearing the same name.

CHAP. XIV. launch into fresh extravagances, and thus prepare for himself fresh disappointment and humiliation.

The British army advanced to Caroor, which was abandoned on their approach. From the defects of the commissariat department their progress to this place was slow; but they met with no annoyance, except from the desultory attacks of parties of the enemy's horse, and from the weather. Their course lay over arid plains, under the operation of a powerful wind raising clouds of dust which obscured the face of day, and which being inhaled with every act of respiration, laid the foundation of serious disease. From this cause, on the arrival of the army at Caroor, no less than twelve hundred men were placed in hospital there.

The capture of Caroor was followed by that of Aravacourchy, a weak place, which offered no resistance beyond the discharge of two guns on the approach of the British advanced guard. The killadar, on being summoned to surrender, earnestly requested permission to save his credit with the Sultan by a few more discharges, kindly promising that no damage should arise to the British party.* Notwithstanding this pledge, and the danger in which the killadar's honour was placed, his request was refused, and the English took possession of Aravacourchy without any further resistance, either real or pretended. The surrender of Daraporam, another weak place, followed. Here a depôt was formed; a number of sick were left in hospital, and

* Mackenzie's Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultan.

some heavy stores and camp equipage deposited, to enable the army to move with as little incumbrance as possible. A brigade was left for their protection, and the army marched to Coimbatore, where they arrived on the 21st of July. A. D. 1790.

From this place an advanced force, under Colonel Stuart, was detached to attack Palligaut; but the route taken was nearly impracticable from the effects of heavy rains, and Colonel Stuart fell back without effecting his object. An attack on Dindigul, conducted by the same officer, was more fortunate. Against this place batteries were opened on the 20th of August, and by the evening of the 21st, a breach, though a very indifferent one, was effected. Imperfect as it was, Colonel Stuart resolved on risking an immediate assault—a determination taken with reference to the remaining stock of ammunition. The continuance of the firing for two hours longer would have consumed all the shot of the English, and a fresh supply could not have been obtained in less than a week. The assault was made with great gallantry, and repelled by the killadar at the head of his men with equal vigour and spirit. The English were foiled, and compelled to retire; but at this moment, greatly to their surprise, a white flag was displayed on the breach, and an offer was made to surrender, on condition of security to persons and private property. This was the more extraordinary, as the killadar had met an invitation to surrender on favourable terms by threatening, if any similar message were subse-

CHAP. XIV. quently sent, that he would blow the messenger from a cannon. The change in his resolution is attributed to his having been abandoned by part of his garrison.* It was fortunate for the English that neither the killadar nor his men were aware of the cause which led to the premature assault.

On his return to Coimbatore, Colonel Stuart was again dispatched to attack Palligaut, but with augmented means, and by a more practicable route. Batteries were opened at daylight on the 21st of
A.D. 1790. September. In less than two hours the fort was silenced, and by the evening a practicable breach was effected. But the necessity for an assault was spared. Some English officers, engaged in reconnoitring, observed a defenceless part of the works, of which possession was immediately taken; and on the following morning the place capitulated on conditions, one of which was protection against the fury of the Nairs, who had joined Colonel Stuart, and were serving in the siege. These were natives of Malabar, on whose countrymen Tippoo Sultan had exercised great cruelties. It was apprehended that they would rejoice in an opportunity of taking revenge on the troops of their oppressor, and it required some effort to restrain them.

Eroad had previously surrendered to an English detachment under Colonel Oldham. The greater part of the troops employed in this service subsequently joined a corps commanded by Colonel Floyd, whose general operations were confined to

* Mackenzie's Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultan.

the south of the river Bahvâny. By a detachment from that corps Sattimungul was taken, with little trouble and no loss. Sattimungul is but a few miles distant from the foot of the pass of Gugehutty. Through that pass Tippoo Sultan and his army began early in September to descend. Rumours of his approach were soon afloat, which appear at first to have received little credit; but their accuracy being confirmed by testimony that could scarcely be doubted, Colonel Floyd forwarded the intelligence to General Medows, and accompanied the communication by a suggestion that the advanced corps of the army should fall back upon head-quarters. Either from the report of Tippoo's descent being disbelieved, or from some other cause, the suggestion was rejected, and Colonel Floyd was ordered to maintain his position. On the thirteenth of September, a large body of the enemy's army passed the ford of Poongar; and the British picquets, which had been sent out to patrol, were driven in by Tippoo's force. A regiment of horse, which had been dispatched to support them, was surrounded, and compelled to take post among some enclosures till relieved by the rest of the British cavalry. The English now became the assailants; several hundred of the enemy were put to the sword; and, the field being completely cleared, the victors returned to camp. They had scarcely dismounted, when the enemy's columns were discovered advancing in great force. The line was instantly formed, and a cannonade commenced on

A. D. 1790.

CHAP. XIV. both sides, which lasted throughout the day.* At sunset the enemy drew off their artillery, which left Colonel Floyd opportunity to deliberate on his future course.

Tippoo had withdrawn his army to a position about six miles from the place of action; but from the inaptitude of a native force to execute movements by night, and from the fall of torrents of rain, which had not extended to the British position, a large part of the troops had failed to find their places in the line, and great disorder prevailed. Colonel Floyd was not aware of these circumstances, or he might have been tempted to renew the conflict, and by taking the enemy unprepared he might probably have defeated them. As it was, he had recourse to a council of war, and the opinion of the majority being in favour of retreat, preparations were made for withdrawing the garrison from Sattimungul, and proceeding to join General Medows. Some reprehensible delay took place in evacuating the fort,† and the retreat was thus retarded. When

* This cannonade gave occasion for one of those graceful expressions of fidelity, of which so many instances have occurred among the native troops. Colonel Floyd, in passing along a part of the line which had suffered most severely, expressed to the native officers his regret at the loss sustained. The answer was—"We have eaten the Company's salt; our lives are at their disposal, and God forbid that we should mind a few casualties." Such is the language of the native troops; and its sincerity has been constantly attested by evidence far more convincing than professions.

† Sir Thomas Munro says that the officer in command was drunk.—Gleig's Life of Munro, vol. i. page 97.

it commenced, the infantry proceeded in one co- CHAP X
lumn, the cavalry in another, and the baggage in a third: but the nature of the country soon compelled a change, and the whole was formed into a single column, the cavalry leading.

On hearing of the march of the British force, Tippoo ordered his troops to be put in motion for immediate pursuit; but the order was obeyed with little promptness, and the day was considerably advanced before the progress of the English was seriously interrupted. The cavalry were two or three miles in advance of the infantry, against whom the whole force of Tippoo was directed. The firing brought them back to the succour of their companions, and by a fortunate mistake, similar to that which once disappointed Hyder Ali of the success which seemed within his grasp,* the son of that conqueror was now induced to desist from an attack in which he had greatly the advantage in point of numbers. A troop of cavalry was mistaken for the personal guard of General Medows, and a report of his arrival spreading rapidly through the British ranks, was received with enthusiastic cheers, with the cause of which the enemy were not long in becoming acquainted. The Sultan, giving credit to the report, which reached him just at the moment when he had received intelligence of the death of Burkar-oo-deen, a favourite relative, and one of his bravest officers, drew off his army, and left the corps of Colonel Floyd at liberty to pursue its

* See vol. i. page 562.

CHAP. XIV. march unmolested. On the 16th of September a junction was effected with the army under General Medows, which was soon afterwards further reinforced by the arrival of Colonel Stuart's division after the capture of Palligaut.

The object of General Medows was to bring Tippoo to a general action. The Sultan was most anxious to avoid this, and for several weeks he evaded the endeavours of the English commander. During this period Tippoo repossessed himself not only of Sattimungul, but of Eroad and Daraporam. At length, alarmed by the progress of an English army in Bramâhal, he dispatched thither the greater part of his force, the residue being left to watch the motions of General Medows. The army whose operations drew Tippoo's attention to Bramâhal was distinguished by the name of the central army, and had originally been commanded by Colonel Kelly. The death of that officer had transferred the command to Colonel Maxwell, who found himself at the head of nine thousand five hundred men. He
A. D. 1790. entered Bramâhal on the 24th October, and early in November he fixed his head-quarters near Caveripatam. The appearance of considerable bodies of light cavalry soon indicated the approach of the Sultan's army, and by the middle of the month it appeared in full force. In the meantime General Medows had marched to form a junction with Colonel Maxwell; and his purpose was effected about three days after Tippoo's appearance. The remainder of the campaign was occupied in marches,

occasionally varied by skirmishes of no importance, CHAP. XI.
the detail of which would be tedious without being instructive. Some overtures for negotiation proceeded from Tippoo; but they were made without sincerity, and ended in nothing. Lord Cornwallis had determined to assume the command of the British army, on the alleged ground that his presence in the scene of action would be to the native allies a pledge of sincerity and of confident hope of success against the common enemy.

In the conduct of the war up to this period, little of military skill had been displayed, and little advantage gained to the cause of the allies. General Medows arrived with his army at Velout, eighteen miles from Madras, on the 27th January, and on A.D. 1791.
the 29th Lord Cornwallis assumed the command. On the 5th February he commenced his march from Velout, and on the 11th the army was concentrated near Vellore. Tippoo Sultan had been engaged in negotiating with the French governor at Pondicherry for assistance; but on receiving intelligence of the march of the British army, he moved rapidly to the defence of the passes into his territories. By a series of judicious feints, the Sultan was deceived as to the point at which it was intended to penetrate, and a large British force, completely equipped and provisioned, was thus enabled to gain the table-land of Mysore without firing a shot.

The first object of the English general was the reduction of Bangalore. The pettah, or town, which was of considerable extent, lay to the north of the fort, and this was the primary object of attack. It

CHAP. XIV. had several gates, one of which being selected for assault, the requisite preparations were made, the field artillery and six battery guns being placed under Colonel Moorhouse, a highly distinguished officer. The first barrier was gallantly carried, and it was expected that the application of a field-piece would soon force the gate. This was found ineffectual, and some eighteen-pounders were brought up, which slowly performed the desired work. In the meantime a vigorous fire of musketry and rockets from the turrets galled the English troops; it was borne, however, with the greatest steadiness: the shattered fragments of the gate were torn away after each discharge; and an opening, though a small one, being at length made, an English lieutenant, who is represented as being of very diminutive size and stature,* was raised on the shoulders of some grenadiers, and passed through. General Medows, who was present, called on the troops to "support the little gentleman;" they responded to the call, and the place was carried.

Tippoo Sultan, who with his army was in the immediate neighbourhood, was alike astonished and irritated at this result, and orders were given to the killadar of the fort to recover possession of the pettah at all risks. They were obeyed with great spirit and gallantry, and the streets of the town were, for a lengthened period, the scene of a determined and doubtful conflict. So long as it was maintained by firing, little advantage was gained on either side. It was finally decided by the bay-

* Lieutenant Ayre, of the 86th regiment.

onet, with which the Mysoreans were driven from every post, and compelled to seek refuge in the fort, with a loss of two thousand in killed and wounded. The loss of the English was not great; but among the killed was Colonel Moorhouse, who fell at the gate. He had risen from the ranks; "but nature," says Colonel Wilks, "had made him a gentleman—uneducated, he had made himself a man of science; a career of uninterrupted distinction had commanded general respect, and his amiable character universal attachment." His memory was honoured by a public funeral and a monument erected at the expense of the Company in the church of Madras. CHAP. XII.

The capture of the pettah was followed by preparations for obtaining possession of the fort. Batteries were erected, a breach made, and, on the night of the 20th of March, a storming party advanced in silence to the attack. They had made some progress before the garrison took the alarm; but the resistance offered to the assailants, though late, was fierce and powerful. The killadar, Bahadar Khan, a distinguished soldier, in whom the pressure of seventy years had not quenched the fire of military ardour, nor seriously diminished his personal ability to obey its suggestions, was in a moment at the head of his men. But his courage was unavailing. The assailants established themselves on the ramparts, and, after a contest of an hour, the fort of Bangalore passed from the hands of Tippoo Sultan into those of the English. The loss on the part of the garrison was severe; more than a thousand of the A.D. 1791.

CHAP. XIV. bodies of their fallen enemies were committed to the grave by the victors. Among the slain was the brave killadar; who having in vain endeavoured to collect a party to make one more stand, fell sword in hand, without a single supporter near him. It was thought that Tippoo might desire to retrieve from the hands of strangers and enemies the remains of one who had served him so faithfully, and an intimation that they would not be withheld was conveyed to him; but either the merits of Bahadar Khan were obliterated by his ill-fortune, or Tippoo really entertained the feeling which his answer is said to have expressed—that the killadar could be buried nowhere with greater propriety than in the neighbourhood of the place in defence of which he had fallen. By the English authorities all the respect that could be shewn to the dead was manifested; and the body of the veteran soldier was attended to its final resting-place by the most distinguished members of the Mussulman part of the British army.

The English were now fixed in the heart of Tippoo Sultan's dominions; but before pursuing further the campaign under Lord Cornwallis, it will be convenient to notice the operations of other armies up to the period when the governor-general obtained possession of Bangalore.

When General Medows marched in the direction of Madras, Colonel Hartley was left with a force, consisting of one regiment of Europeans and two battalions of sepoys, with some field artillery, to act

against a body of the Sultan's troops, amounting, at the lowest estimate, to six thousand, left under the command of an officer named Hussein Ali. This officer, disdaining the cautious policy of his master, took up a strong position near Calicut, and resolved, if challenged, to abide the result of a regular action. He was not disappointed, except in the result of the engagement: he was attacked and utterly defeated, with the loss of a thousand killed and wounded; the general himself and nine hundred men were made prisoners on the field, and the flying remnant of the army being hotly pursued, fifteen hundred more laid down their arms.

A few days before this action, General Abercromby, the governor of Bombay, arrived with a respectable force at Tellicherry, advanced to Cananore, which surrendered unconditionally, and in a very short time occupied the whole of the province of Malabar, where the name and authority of the Sultan were odious beyond the power of description.

The army of Nizam Ali began to assemble in the neighbourhood of Hyderabad about the time that General Medows took the field. It was joined by a detachment of English sepoys and a company of European artillery, and, after considerable delay, marched to lay siege to Copool. This was a protracted and tedious operation. The situation of Copool is upon a lofty and precipitous rock. The cannon employed against it were disabled by a week's firing, and the efforts of the besiegers were suspended for a long interval, until a new battering

CHAP. XIV. train could be collected from various points. They were resumed, but with little prospect of a speedy termination, till the alarm caused by the unexpected news of the fall of Bangalore led to a surrender, after a resistance of several months. Bahandur Bundur, a fort about three miles to the northward of Copool, in a like manner yielded to the good fortune of the allies.

With the Mahrattas, as with Nizam Ali, an English detachment was destined to act. It consisted of two battalions of sepoys and three companies of artillery, two native and one European. It was dispatched from Bombay, and proceeded in boats up the river Jaigur as far as navigable. The period of debarkation was the very height of the monsoon. The ascent of the Ghauts was performed under the most discouraging difficulties; but by perseverance they were surmounted. At Coompta the detachment joined the Mahratta army, consisting of twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot, under the command of Purseram Bhow. The first blow was to be struck against Darwar; and the whole Mahratta army, with the English detachment, moved to the attack of this place, which they reached by very slow marches. The Mahratta forces were of little use in the conduct of a siege, and the means of reduction were found inadequate. Application for reinforcements was made to Bombay, and a regiment of European infantry, a battalion of sepoys, and a considerable number of European artillerymen, were dispatched, under the command of

Colonel Frederick. An assault prematurely made ended in repulse; and shortly afterwards Colonel Frederick died from the effects, as it was believed, of disappointment. The siege continued to be languidly prosecuted, till the fall of Bangalore became known; an event which produced at Darwar the same effect as at Copool—an offer to surrender.

The garrison were permitted to march out with their arms and ammunition, and with colours flying; but four days after their departure their camp was attacked and plundered by the Mahrattas, many of the party killed, and the commander, covered with wounds, sent as a prisoner to a Mahratta fort. Such an exploit would be perfectly in accordance with the Mahratta character if undertaken solely with a view to plunder; but it was alleged, and it is believed not without ground, that the commander had provoked the attack by a virtual breach of the conditions of the capitulation. One of these conditions was, that the guns and stores were to become prize to the captors. The guns and stores were accordingly left by the retiring garrison; but it was said that the powder had been wilfully rendered useless by damping, and the other stores destroyed to the extent which the time and means of the commander allowed.*

The surrender of Darwar was followed by that of the strong fort of Khooshgul, eleven miles distant,

* Colonel Wilks says that this was admitted by a Mysorean officer with whom he had conversed, who affirmed that he had been personally engaged in the destruction of the stores.

CHAP. XIV. and by the early possession of every place north of the Toombuddra.

Lord Cornwallis marched from Bangalore on the
A. D. 1791. 22nd March, and a few days afterwards unexpectedly encountered the army of the Sultan. Tippoo's only anxiety was to escape from a situation in which he might be compelled to fight, and with some difficulty he effected his object. The army of Lord Cornwallis was now strengthened, or at least numerically increased, by the junction of about ten thousand of Nizam Ali's horse.* To effect this junction was

* Colonel Wilks gives a curious account of these mounted warriors; he says, "They were rated at fifteen thousand, and really amounted to ten thousand men, well mounted on horses in excellent condition, and to those who had never before had an opportunity of observing an Indian army, their first appearance was novel and interesting. It is probable that no national or private collection of ancient arms in Europe contains any weapon or article of personal equipment which might not be traced in this motley crowd; the Parthian bow and arrow, the iron club of Scythia, sabres of every age and nation, lances of every length and description, and matchlocks of every form; metallic helmets of every pattern, simple defences of the head, a steel bar descending diagonally as a protection to the face, defences of bars, scales or chain-work descending behind or on the shoulders, cuirasses, suits of armour or detached pieces for the arm, complete coats of mail in chain-work, shields, bucklers, and quilted jackets, sabre-proof. The ostentatious display of these antique novelties was equally curious in its way. The free and equal use of two sword-arms, the precise and perfect command of a balanced spear eighteen feet long, of the club which was to shiver an iron helmet, of the arrow discharged in flight; but, above all, the total absence of every symptom of order, or obedience, or command, excepting groups collecting round their respective flags; every individual an independent warrior, self-impelled, affecting to be the champion whose single arm was to achieve victory; scampering among each other in

one object of the governor-general's march; another was to meet a valuable convoy, with a reinforcement

wild confusion; the whole exhibition presenting to the mind an imagery scarcely more allied to previous impressions of reality there than the fictions of an Eastern tale or the picturesque disorder of a dramatic scene."—Sketches, vol. iii. pp. 135, 136. A similar but less minute description of these troopers is given in Mackenzie's Sketches of the War with Tippoo Sultan, vol. ii. p. 57. Of the value of the accession of strength which their junction afforded, Colonel Wilks gives the following account:—"The impossibility of relying on such a body for the execution of any combined movement was sufficiently obvious; but the most moderate expectations looked to an enlargement of the limits of observation, the relief of the regular cavalry from the duties of the light troop, and an extended command over the resources of the country to be traversed. Two thousand of the most select were attached to the reserve under Colonel Floyd, and placed under the immediate management of Brigade Major Dales, in the hope that his skill, and conciliation, and example, might render them efficient. Fifteen days were sufficient to shew the total disappointment of the most meagre hopes. The enemy practised upon them on every successive day some enterprise or stratagem, always successful. They soon shewed themselves unequal to the protection of their own foragers on ordinary occasions, and after the lapse of a few days they never stirred beyond the English picquets, consuming forage and grain, and augmenting distress of every kind, without the slightest return of even apparent utility. Their prowess was indeed exhibited at an early period in plundering the villages to which Lord Cornwallis had granted protection; but when it was understood that his lordship disclaimed such proceedings, but could not control them, the villagers undertook their own defence, and the march would produce exhibitions of attack and defence, in which the wishes of the army were uniformly adverse to their allies, and an English safeguard would frequently appear protecting their enemies against their friends. The contemptible state of this cavalry may in some degree have arisen from the effeminacy and decline which marked the general character of the government to which they belonged; but its more immediate causes were referred to

CHAP. XIV. of between four and five thousand men, under Lieutenant Colonel Oldham. These were met at Venitataghery, and both objects of the movement having been attained, Lord Cornwallis returned to Banga-
A.D. 1791. lore, where he arrived on the 28th of April.

Notwithstanding the success which had thus far attended the British arms, the governor-general was not in a condition to prosecute the war with vigour. He was especially distressed by a deficiency of the means of transport for provisions, camp equipage, ordnance, and stores; and this deficiency might have appeared to justify some cessation of active exertion. The love of enterprise scarcely entered into his character; yet, while placed in circumstances which seemed to excuse inactivity, he resolved on a step which, with reference to his position, may be regarded as a bold one: it was to march at once upon Tippoo's capital, Seringapatam. One obvious motive for this decision was a desire to bring the war to a speedy termination; but there was another, not without weight—the apprehension of a rupture with France, from which country Tippoo might then expect to derive assistance, which would render the

a commander (Tedjewunt Singh, a Hindoo) of no respectability or military pretension, who was said to have risen to command by court intrigue, and was deemed better qualified to render his master a good commercial account of the profits of the subsidy than a splendid report of military glory. His second in command, Assud Ali, and the ostensible military leader, had some reputation for that precarious valour which depends on interested motives, or animal excitement or depression, but, like his principal, was incapable of command, venal, rapacious, and unfaithful to his trust." —Ibid. page 136 to 138.

difficulties of the contest far greater than those with which the governor-general had now to contend. CHAP. XIV

To make the best use of the limited means of transport possessed by the British army, all superfluous equipage was to be left in Bangalore. The officers were requested to reduce their claims for accommodation to the lowest practicable degree, as well as to assist the public service by any means which they could command; and they cheerfully sacrificed their own convenience to the demands of the state. On the 4th of May the army was put in motion. It advanced by a circuitous route, interrupted by jungles, rivers, and ravines. From these causes the inadequate supply of cattle for transport became still further reduced. Numbers died from exhaustion, and large quantities of stores were destroyed because they could not be carried forward. With the usual policy of Hyder Ali and his son, the country traversed by the invaders had been divested of all power of affording relief to their necessities. Conflagration had done its work—the grain not burnt had been buried; and not an inhabitant remained through the expanded waste to recount the story of its devastation, or guide the steps of those who now traversed its blighted fields. Their march seemed to be over a country where some great convulsion of nature had at once swept away every human being, and every thing by which human life could be supported. At length, at a stone fort, called Malavelly, some grain was found; but the quantity lost on the march was so great that even this opportune A. D. 1791

CHAP. XIV. and happy discovery did not preclude the necessity of reducing the daily issue of rice to one-half of the usual allowance. Thus, struggling with difficulties and amid the terrors of famine, the British army reached Arikera, about nine miles east of Seringa-
A.D. 1791. patam, on the 13th of May.

Its approach was regarded by Tippoo with no common apprehension. From the moment of the fall of Bangalore, the attack upon which place he had regarded as mad and hopeless, he became alarmed for the safety of his capital. Under the first impulse of fear, he had ordered the removal to Chittledroog of his treasure, his harem, and the families of his officers, whom he retained in pledge for the fidelity of those to whom they belonged; but by the advice of his mother, who exercised a powerful influence over him, and who represented that such a proceeding, being imputed to despondency, would have a bad effect on the minds of his troops and subjects, he abandoned his intention. The parent to whom he was indebted for this service rendered him another. Tippoo had given personal offence to the family of the Nizam. In the hope of detaching that prince from the confederacy, the mother of the Sultan wrote to him, imploring his forgiveness of an act which she attributed to the intoxication of youthful pride, and which she declared the Sultan deeply regretted.

But though Tippoo allowed himself to be dissuaded from one manifestation of fear, he gave way to others, which distinctly shewed the state of his

mind. His hatred of the English had been gratified by causing the walls of the houses in the principal streets of Seringapatam to be decorated with caricatures of the people whom he abhorred, of enormous size, and, in some instances, of disgusting character. These were now by royal command obliterated, and the walls of Seringapatam no longer spoke the Sultan's contempt and aversion for his European enemies.

The capital of Mysore contained other proofs of Tippoo's feelings towards the English, and these too were to disappear. The enfranchisement of prisoners under the treaty of 1784 had even at this time not been perfectly carried out, and among the victims of the Sultan's perfidy were twenty English youths, who, having received the same kind of education which is given to the dancing girls of the East, were destined to delight the ear and eye of their enslaver by the graces of song and gesture. To relieve himself from the inconvenience to be apprehended from these witnesses to his treachery, assassination offered the easiest and most effectual means; consequently, according to the moral code of Tippoo, the best. The youths were murdered, and the course of crime was followed up by the secret murder of other prisoners, who like them had been unlawfully detained.

Such were the results of the alarm produced by the fall of Bangalore, and the anticipation of an attack upon Seringapatam. An English army was now within a few miles of the capital, and the

CHAP. XIV. anxiety of Tippoo increased with the apparently increasing danger. He had hitherto cautiously avoided a general action, and he defended this course by reference to the example of his father, who had gained little or no advantage from general actions, but whose chief success arose from striking at detachments. Stimulated partly by his fears and partly by the representations of his officers, which were aided, it is said, by the remonstrances of the women of his harem, who expatiated on the discredit of suffering his capital to be menaced without an effort to repel those by whom it was threatened, he now resolved to depart from the policy which he had hitherto steadily pursued.

On the arrival of the English army at Arikera, a considerable body of the enemy was visible at the distance of about six miles in front. This force was drawn up with its right to the river Cavery, and its left to a rugged hill a short distance from the bank. It was at first supposed to be only a large detachment sent to observe the motions of the British army, and Lord Cornwallis proceeded to take measures for ascertaining the best point for crossing the river, with a view to a junction with General Abercromby, who, with the Bombay army, was posted at Peripatam, about forty miles westward of Seringapatam, and whose co-operation was deemed necessary to the reduction of the latter place. The English general, however, soon learned that though only a small part of the enemy's army could be seen, the whole was encamped between his position and Se-

ringapatam; its right protected by the Cavery, its left by a chain of hills, with a deep swampy ravine, the passage of which was defended by batteries running along the whole of the front. The distance between the river and the hills nowhere exceeded a mile and a half, and within cannon-shot of Tippoo's line was not more than a mile. The difficulties in attacking an enemy in such a position were obviously great; but the result of such information as could be obtained of the country seemed to shew that it would be practicable to cross a ridge on the right of the English army from the high road to Seringapatam, where they were encamped, to another road leading to the same place; and Lord Cornwallis thereupon resolved to attempt by a night march to turn the enemy's left flank, and by gaining his rear before daylight, cut off the retreat of his main body to the capital. To effect this object, six European regiments, twelve battalions of native infantry, with three field-pieces, one European and three native regiments of cavalry, were ordered to be in readiness to march at eleven o'clock on the night of the 13th May, leaving their picquets and camp guards behind, and their tents standing. Nizam Ali's cavalry were to follow in the morning; but the order was not to be communicated till the moment of moving, lest the plan should be frustrated by treachery. A.D. 1791.

The ground occupied by the British army was intersected by ruined villages, inclosures, and deep ravines, and from this cause much time was lost in forming the troops in the prescribed order of march.

CHAP. XIV. Before they moved a terrific storm arose, and the march was performed under a deluge of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning of the most awful character. Exhausted by fatigue, scared by the lightning, and benumbed by the chilling effects of the rain, the cattle could scarcely be made to move; and the night, except when temporarily irradiated by the vivid flashes, being impenetrably dark, several regiments lost their way, and portions of the British force were moving in almost every variety of direction: repeated halts thus became necessary. On one of them, Lord Cornwallis found himself with no more than one company and one gun. A staff-officer, who made the discovery that the general had thus outmarched the greater part of his force, or had become, in some other way, separated from them, attempted to find the column by tracing, with the aid of the lightning, the marks of the gun-carriage wheels; but the tracks, though so recently made, had been completely obliterated by the unceasing torrents of rain, and he narrowly escaped riding into the enemy's encampments.

The dawn of day removed one of the difficulties which had retarded the progress of the British force; but it destroyed the hope of executing the original plan, which required the cover of night: still, as the most arduous part of the march had been accomplished, Lord Cornwallis determined to persevere, and to endeavour to force Tippoo to action on ground believed to be less advantageous to him than that which he had chosen. The Sultan did not

decline the challenge. The approach of the English was unobserved till they had begun to descend the heights on the eastward of the ravine. Their first object was to gain possession of a hill commanding the left of the enemy. This was perceived by Tippoo, and he made arrangements for defeating it, which have deservedly received the approbation of eminent military authorities.* He dispatched a considerable body of cavalry and infantry, with eight guns, to seize the hill towards which the views of the English were directed, and sent out some cavalry to hover on the right of the English, and take advantage of any opportunity to charge—thus impeding their progress, and giving to his troops advancing to the hill time to take possession of it. Tippoo also very promptly changed his front to the left, covering one flank by a steep hill previously in his rear, and the other by a ravine which had run along his former front.

From the nature of the ground, the weak state of the cattle, and the annoyances of the enemy's horse, the passage of the British infantry to the same side of the ravine with the enemy was slow. It was at length accomplished, and the requisite disposition for action made. Opposite to the enemy's main body, nine battalions were posted in a first line under General Medows and Colonel Stuart, and four in a second line under Colonel Harris, while five battalions, under Colonel Maxwell, were destined for an attack upon the enemy's corps on the

* Colonel Wilks and Sir Thomas Munro.

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hill. This attack might have been made at an earlier period, but it was judiciously postponed till the other parts of the disposition were complete, in order to deter Tippoo from making any attempt on the flank or rear of the troops moving forward to drive his detachment from the hill.

With the attack on that detachment the action commenced. On the approach of Colonel Maxwell the enemy's eight guns were drawn off. The infantry kept their ground, and maintained a heavy, though ill-directed, fire of musketry. Colonel Maxwell had no guns, but he had made provision for covering both his flanks against cavalry. Thus unencumbered and unapprehensive of interruption, he advanced with a rapidity and impetuosity which speedily broke the line of the enemy's infantry, and even overtook some of the guns on the opposite descent of the hill. The infantry made a struggle to defend them, but in vain; the possession of the guns followed the possession of the hill. The rapid success of Colonel Maxwell on the hill was the signal for the advance of the two lines below against the main body of the enemy. The battle now became general along the entire front. The enemy's cavalry, who had greatly annoyed the British army while advancing to take up their ground, made no stand after they were formed in line of battle; the fire of Tippoo's artillery even began to relax. His infantry behaved in a manner far surpassing any expectation that had been formed of them; but the near approach of the first line of the British army caused them to waver.

Colonel Maxwell had been ordered, after carrying the hill, to leave there only a sufficient force to retain possession, and with the remainder of his corps to advance and possess himself of the hills which covered the left flank of the main army of the enemy. He was rapidly performing this duty, when Colonel Floyd, with the British cavalry, who had been kept out of the range of the enemy's shot, ready to take advantage of any opportunity that might occur for their services, charged the rear-guard of the enemy's retreating infantry, and nearly destroyed them. Their progress was checked by a larger body of infantry, which rallied and made a stand on a space of broken ground extremely disadvantageous for cavalry. Colonel Floyd accordingly prepared to withdraw his men from a position where they could not act effectively; but at this moment the cavalry of Nizam Ali, which had followed the English cavalry, threw themselves in an unwieldly mass in front of the left wing of the British army, the advance of which they impeded, while from the nature of the ground they could prove of no service had they been disposed to perform any. For some time they could neither be brought to advance nor recede; "and thus," said the governor-general, "an invaluable though short space of time was lost, which enabled the enemy to avail themselves of the vicinity of the batteries upon the island, and by retreating to their protection in the utmost confusion, to save their army from entire destruction."

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Lord Cornwallis, while complaining of this extraordinary conduct, charitably gives the actors the praise of "good intentions." Colonel Wilks takes a less favourable view. "It is asserted," he says, "by many officers in the Mysorean army, that this impediment was designed; that a horseman, with a particular badge from Assud Ali, was seen at this moment to deliver a message to Tippoo, who was in the rear anxiously urging the escape of his guns, of which many had been actually abandoned, but were recovered during this delay, and one only fell into the hands of the English in this branch of the attack; and that another messenger attended Tippoo on the same night. The author has since perused the active and treacherous correspondence with the enemy in this campaign, not only of Assud Ali, a person notoriously worthless, but of other officers of fairer fame in the same service, whose names it might be injurious to the English interests in India to disclose at the present period."*

Adverting to the good conduct of Tippoo's infantry on this occasion, Sir Thomas Munro says:—"They stood the fire of musketry till our troops were within a few yards of them; they defended every point; they rallied wherever the ground was favourable; and when at last driven from the field, they retreated without confusion. All this change of behaviour," he adds,

* Written in the year 1817. See Sketches, vol. iii. page 152. Colonel Wilks had been political resident at Mysore, and enjoyed unusual opportunities of investigating the secret history of that country.

" was, however, less owing perhaps to the improvement of their discipline than to other causes—the strength of the ground, which, being full of rocks and ravines, afforded them everywhere shelter, and made it difficult to follow them; and their proximity to the island, the batteries of which covered them from pursuit."* Lord Cornwallis attributes the good behaviour of Tippoo's infantry to his presence and exertions among them: whatever the cause, it is evident that the difficulty of putting them to flight was greater than had been anticipated. But the task had been performed — victory sat upon the banners of the British army; yet the fruits of victory were to be abandoned—the object for which so much fatigue, so much loss, and so many perils had been incurred, was to be renounced; the prize, for which so many public and private sacrifices had been made, was within sight, but it was not to be grasped. CHAP. XIV.

In great distress for provisions, and with intolerable labour to the troops from the want of cattle, the British army by two marches reached Caniambaddy, the ford at that place being regarded as an eligible spot for crossing the river; and there, on the 20th of May, exactly a week after his arrival at Arikera, Lord Cornwallis determined to relinquish, for a time at least, all attempts against Seringapatam, and to retrace his steps to Bangalore. On the 21st, orders were dispatched to General Abercromby to return to Malabar; on the 22nd the whole of the bat- A. D. 1791.

* Gleig's Life of Sir Thomas Munro, vol. i. page 118.

CHAP. XIV tering train and heavy equipments of the army were destroyed; and on the 26th the governor-general commenced his retrograde march.

Neither party in the war had at this time much cause for exultation. Tippoo had discarded his usual caution—had ventured on a general action and had been defeated, the bitterness of defeat being aggravated by its having occurred within sight of his capital. The English commander had provoked a battle in which he had been victorious; but with reference to the object for which the enterprise had been undertaken and the battle fought, he was beaten. "As a mere evidence of superiority," says Colonel Wilks, "the victory was complete, and had there been no movement of the cavalry, would probably have been very decisive. But the observation of Sir Eyre Coote, on a parallel occasion, was applied by an old officer to the present: 'I would gladly exchange all these trophies and the reputation of victory for a few days' rice!"* "We gained nothing by the victory," says Sir Thomas Munro, "but the liberty of looking at the island,"†—a privilege scarcely worth the price that had been paid for it.

The British army commenced its retreat, and before the conclusion of the first day's march, a large body of horse made their appearance on the left of the principal column, near its rear. This was not a point from which an attack had been apprehended;

* Sketches, vol. iii. page 152.

† Life, vol. i. page 119.

but from knowing the rapidity with which the cavalry of Tippoo moved in all directions, no doubt was entertained that the approaching horsemen belonged to his army, and that they would immediately fall on the stores and baggage. Colonel Stuart, who commanded in the rear, instantly prepared to resist the attack; and the British had begun to fire, when one of the horsemen rode towards a staff-officer who was giving some orders, and shouting that he was a Mahratta, entreated that the firing might cease. Similar communications were made at the head of the column, and the British commander found himself suddenly reinforced by two Mahratta armies, one under Hurry Punt, commander-in-chief, the other under Purseram Bhow, who, after the fall of Darwar, had marched towards Seringapatam to join the English army. A British detachment accompanied the army of Purseram Bhow. The Mahrattas were believed to have been not less than a hundred and fifty miles distant from the army which they so suddenly joined. Above a hundred messengers had been sent forward to announce its approach, but every one of them had been intercepted by the light troops of Tippoo.

Had the junction of the Mahrattas taken place somewhat earlier, some heavy sacrifices made by the British army might have been averted. As it was, their accession was most welcome. They brought a supply of bullocks, large stores of all necessary articles of consumption, and of some which

CHAP. XIV. were not strictly to be regarded as necessary.* The march of the confederates was slow, in order to afford opportunity for the arrival of large convoys of provisions and plunder coming up in the Mahratta
A. D. 1791. rear. On the 18th of June the army was within three miles of Hooliordroog, a fort established on a

* Lieutenant Moor (author of a Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little's Detachment) and Colonel Wilks draw lively pictures of the bazaars of the Mahratta camp. The former commences by saying, "all vocations are seen proceeding with as much earnestness on the part of their professors, as in a well-regulated city in time of peace, which it more resembles than a market moving with a mob, bearing the name of an army, in the centre of an enemy's country." Colonel Wilks's description, which corresponds substantially with that of Lieutenant Moor, is subjoined. "The bazaar of a Mahratta camp presents an exhibition of no ordinary character, and to their famished visitors, exhibited a picture of the spoils of the east and the industry of the west. From a web of English broadcloth to a Birmingham pen-knife; from the shawls of Cashmere to the second-hand garment of a Hindoo; from diamonds of the first water to the silver ear-ring of a poor plundered village maiden; from oxen, sheep, and poultry, to the dried salt fish of Concan; almost every thing was seen that could be presented by the best bazaars of the richest towns: but, above all, 'the tables of the money-changers,' overspread with the coins of every country of the East, in the open air and public street of the camp, gave evidence of an extent of mercantile activity utterly inconceivable in any camp excepting that of systematic plunderers by wholesale and retail. Every variety of trade appeared to be exercised with a large competition and considerable diligence, and among them one apparently the least adapted to a wandering life—the trade of a tanner—was practised with eminent success. A circular hole dug in the earth, a raw hide adapted to it at the bottom and sides, and secured above with a series of skewers run through its edges into the earth, formed the tan-pit: on marching days the tan-pit with its contents, in the shape of a bag, formed one side of a load for a horse or bullock, and the liquid preparation was either

small rock, of great strength. At the foot of the rock was a town, which being occupied without difficulty, the killadar surrendered the fort on a promise of security to private property, and of special protection against the Mahrattas. The inhabitants, who had taken refuge in the fort, proceeded in the direction of Madoor, under the care of an English escort, the commander of which had orders to accompany the travellers the entire distance to Madoor if required. All, however, appeared quiet, and not a single Mahratta was visible on the route. Fear was thus dispelled, and when about half the march was accomplished, the leader of the retiring party intimated to the English officer that, as there was no reason to apprehend danger, it would be unnecessary to subject the escort to further trouble. It accordingly returned, but was no sooner at a sufficient distance to permit the manifestation of Mahratta enterprise, than the freebooting allies of the British, in conformity with established custom, fell upon the unfortunate fugitives, and plundered them of every thing they possessed.

Hooliordroog contained many state prisoners, and there the captors found new evidence of the

emptied or preserved, according to the length or expected repetition of the march. The best tanning material (catechu, a vegetable preparation long known in Europe by the strange name of terra japonica) is equally accessible and portable; and the English officers obtained from these ambulatory tan-pits what their own Indian capitals could not then produce, except as European imports—excellent sword belts."—Sketches, vol. iii. pp. 158, 159.

CHAP. XIV. Sultan's cruelty. "Among a number of captives," says an historian of the period, "that were bound in chains of various construction at Hooliordroog, several, who had their ancles fastened asunder by a heavy iron bar of about eighteen inches in length, had from habit acquired a straddling amble, which, when liberated, they could not for a length of time alter or amend; some, from having been closely pinioned, could move neither arm; others had acquired a stoop, from which they were unable to stand erect: in short, as most of them had been confined in this wretched state for a period of about ten years, there were few indeed who had not lost the power of some limb or other."*

Hooliordroog was dismantled, and the army proceeded on its course. Oostradroog was summoned to surrender, but the killadar sent a refusal, and it was not thought prudent to enforce the demand by arms. Savandroog was reconnoitred, but appeared so formidable, that even the ceremony of a summons was in this instance waived. The army
A. D. 1791. reached Bangalore on the 11th June. Before the arrival at that place a plan of future proceedings had been arranged. The continued co-operation of the Mahrattas it was necessary to purchase by a loan of nearly a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, the means of making the advance being secured by stopping the commercial investment of dollars in transit from England to China. To the English

* Mackenzie's Sketches of the War with Tippoo Sultan, vol. ii. page 115.

the campaign had been a cause of heavy loss. The Mahrattas, on the contrary, had, by the assiduous use of their usual practices, been greatly enriched, both individually and nationally. Yet the latter thought it fit that the English should pay for their continued services against a common enemy, and the governor-general did not feel himself in a situation to refuse. This important preliminary being arranged, Purseram Bhow, with his army and a detachment of Bombay troops, proceeded by Sera to commence a series of operations in the north-west. The greater part of the Nizam's cavalry, under Assud Ali, were to operate to the north-east. The army of Lord Cornwallis was to be interposed between the enemy and the Company's territories, as well for the protection of the latter, as for the convenience of bringing forward supplies, for reducing such of the intermediate fortresses as might be necessary, and for establishing a chain of tenable posts from Madras to Seringapatam, by which the transit of supplies might be facilitated when the army should be called to assemble before the enemy's capital.

The first movement of Lord Cornwallis was in a south-eastern direction to Oossore. On his approach the garrison evacuated and blew up the fort. A train had been laid for the magazine, intended to explode after the entry of the English troops; but by a happy accident it did not take effect. Here again the perfidy and cruelty of Tippoo were brought conspicuously to notice. Three Englishmen had been confined in Oossore; one of whom, named

CHAP. XIV. Hamilton, having given up all hopes of recovering his freedom, had reconciled his mind to the circumstances in which he was placed, and apparently contemplated Oossore as his final abode. As in other instances, the fall of Bangalore had led to the murder of these unhappy men, whose graves were now pointed out to their indignant countrymen.

From Oossore the English army moved in the direction of the Policode and Ryaccotah passes, and took possession of various forts, some of them without resistance. Ryaccotah was not so easily obtained: it was defended by successive ranges of works, and garrisoned by eight hundred men; and so confident was the killadar in the strength of his works and his garrison, that he not only rejected the summons to surrender, but fired on the flag that brought it. The task of reducing this place fell to a brigade under Major Gowdie, who sent a detachment of about three hundred and fifty men, with guns, to attack the pettah. The gate was soon blown open; but the garrison, aided by the inhabitants, kept up a brisk fire on the assailants from the upper and central works. Major Gowdie led the succeeding attacks in person, and carried several successive gates, but did not venture to attempt the summit. On the appearance of the main body of the army, however, the place surrendered.

The capture of other forts of inferior importance demands no especial notice; but the attack on Nundedroog is entitled to some attention. This fort was situated on a granite rock of tremendous height,

and no labour had been spared to add to its strength. Major Gowdie, who had reduced many of the minor forts, found his means inadequate to an attack upon Nundedroog. Reinforcements were obtained, and the guns having with incredible labour been carried part of the way up the hill, batteries were constructed, and began to fire with visible effect. The fire was vigorously returned from the fort; but at the end of twenty-one days two breaches were effected by the besiegers—one in the exterior rampart, the other in an outwork. Lord Cornwallis now advanced his army within a few miles of the place, and orders were given for a night assault. It took place soon after midnight of the 19th of October, and was made simultaneously by two parties upon the two breaches. The enemy were prepared to receive the assailants with a heavy fire of musketry and rockets; but more injury was inflicted by stones of immense size and weight rolled down upon those who were ascending. The resistance, however, was not long protracted; and Nundedroog was added to the acquisitions of the British army under Lord Cornwallis. Before the attack was made, a portion of the garrison were clamorous for surrender; and on its taking place, some descended the wall by ladders of ropes, and escaped through the jungles; others, abandoning their posts, fled for shelter to the principal pagoda, where they were subsequently made prisoners. The commanding officer was in despair. His name was Luft Ali Beg; he was a man of high rank, and had stood well in the esteem of

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CHAP. XIV. Hyder Ali. At the battle of Arnée he had been ordered to make a charge with a large and select body of cavalry on the rear of the English, with a view to facilitate the retreat of Hyder Ali's artillery. He attempted to execute his orders, but was checked by the active and well-directed fire of the horse artillery of the English, which his troops refused to face. The wrath of the capricious barbarian whom Luft Ali Beg served was extreme; and his unfortunate servant was committed to the custody of another Mahometan officer, with instructions to inflict upon him severe corporal punishment, the marks of which were to be exhibited to two brahmin witnesses, in proof that the Sultan's orders were carried into effect. The ingenuity of Luft Ali Beg and his gaoler contrived to evade the actual execution of the sentence by the use of a caustic, which produced the appearance necessary to satisfy the witnesses, without subjecting the sufferer to any serious inconvenience; and as under an Eastern despotism such incidents are soon forgotten, Luft Ali Beg, after a time, became again an important personage in the court and camp of the Mysorean sovereign. By Tippoo he was associated with three other of his servants in an embassy to Constantinople, which was to have proceeded from thence to Paris; but the ambassadors never got beyond the former city, where their reception was cold and unsatisfactory; and after an absence of nearly five years they returned, without any result but the expenditure of about twenty lacs of rupees,

the loss by contagious disease of several hundreds of their followers, and the contribution to the state papers of Mysore of a journal of vast extent. To his former failings, Luft Ali Beg had now added that of having suffered one of the strongest and most important places in his master's dominions to fall into the hands of the English. CHAP. XIV.

The reduction of Nundedroog was followed by the dispatch of a detachment under Colonel Maxwell into Baramâhal, to counteract the depredations in progress there by a force under Bakir Saib, son of the gallant killadar of Darwar, slain in the capture of that place. The business assigned to this force was to devastate the whole country, so as to incapacitate it from contributing to the supplies of the English army, and its chief post was at a mud fort named Penagra. The fort was speedily taken, and Bakir Saib withdrew from the country which he had been sent to ravage. Colonel Maxwell then proceeded towards Kistnaghery, with the intention of destroying the pettah, so as to leave the enemy's predatory parties no cover there. Possession of the pettah was soon gained; and an opportunity seeming to offer for a successful attack upon the upper fort, the attempt was made and failed. The British detachment sustained considerable loss, but retired in good order, after setting fire to the pettah.

In Coimbatore, the defence of the fort bearing the same name with the province, and of Palagaut, with their reciprocal communications, had been entrusted to Major Cuppage. That officer deeming

CHAP. XIV. Coimbatore incapable of sustaining a siege, removed the heavy guns, ammunition, and stores to Palagaut. Lieutenant Chalmers, who was left at Coimbatore, on examining the guns which had been cast aside as unserviceable, found three which stood proof. By collecting and joining wheels and fragments of carriages which lay scattered about the fort, he found the means of mounting them. With these and a few swivels, a quantity of damaged powder, and five hundred shot, obtained from Major Cuppage, he hoped to make a stand for a few days, in the event of the fort being attacked.

The apprehension of attack was soon converted into certainty. The place was invested by a force of two thousand infantry, a considerable body of cavalry, eight guns, and a number of irregular troops. The garrison consisted of a hundred and twenty topasses,* or natives, partially of Portuguese origin, and about two hundred Travancoreans, half of whom ran away when they found a siege was expected, while those who remained were extremely insubordinate.

The enemy pitched on the north-west of the pettah, and summoned the place to surrender, under pain of death to every person within it, not excepting women and children. The summons was disregarded; it was repeated after the expiration of two days without effect. On the third day a battery was completed, and the fort was once more summoned, but with an offer of favourable terms. The

* Literally, wearers of hats.

offer was rejected, and in the evening the besiegers began to fire from the battery. The shot did considerable damage to the works, which it gave the garrison abundant employment to repair. Another battery was completed on the following day, and a vigorous fire of guns and rockets was maintained. A third battery was soon in a forward state. In the meantime Lieutenant Chalmers had prepared several casks, filled with combustibles, which were placed on the ramparts, to be used against the enemy should they attempt an escalade, which, from their preparation of ladders, seemed to be intended. The enemy prepared a fourth battery, and the besieged opened three mines. As the danger increased, the mines were loaded and the gates blocked up with earth and stones. The store of shot beginning to fail, the hammermen were actively employed in making iron slugs to supply the deficiency of balls. The works of the besiegers continued to be carried on till they were advanced within fifty yards of the ditch: and as it was known that large reinforcements were proceeding to their assistance, a general attack was now hourly expected. At this time the store of ammunition within the fort was nearly exhausted; the wounded, who were numerous, were without medical assistance, and the Travancoreans who remained were clamorous for surrender. Still the gallant commander, who was nobly supported by a young French officer named De la Combe, in the service of the Rajah of Travancore, refused to succumb.

CHAP. XIV. Two months within two days had passed before the enemy ventured on a general assault. They advanced with great steadiness, planted their ladders, and mounted the parapet at five distinct places. The first struggle took place at a point defended by De la Combe, whose personal gallantry communicated its influence to those whom he commanded, and prepared for the assailants a fierce resistance. The enemy had avoided the mines, and resort to the combustible barrels was delayed till not only was the ditch filled by the assailants, but numbers of them were actually on the ramparts, fighting hand to hand with the besieged. De la Combe would have been overpowered had not a timely reinforcement been sent to his relief; and Lieutenant Chalmers, who was personally engaged in defending the weakest point of the works, was in danger of a similar fate. At a moment when successful resistance seemed scarcely longer practicable, one of the barrels being thrown amongst a crowded mass of the enemy exploded, and the fortune of the day was turned. The besiegers gave way, and as party after party retired from the ramparts, their discomfiture was increased by hurling down on them vast pieces of rock. The conflict lasted two hours, and the number of the enemy's dead left on the ramparts and within the ditch exceeded the entire strength of the garrison by whom they had been so bravely repulsed.

It was not fitting that such men should be abandoned; and though a due regard to the safety of

Palagaut prevented Major Cuppage from doing much for their relief, he afforded some assistance, and with the aid of some revenue troops under the direction of Mr. Macleod, a gallant and enterprising civil servant, the enemy were driven from the pettah which they had continued to occupy, and chased to the Bewany, a distance of about twenty miles, with the loss of a large quantity of their stores. To add to the permanent strength of the garrison, a company of sepoys, commanded by Lieutenant Nash, was ordered in, and by some further additions it was increased to about seven hundred men.

Scarcely had Lieutenant Chalmers time to repair the breaches in the works and make other dispositions for defence, before the enemy reappeared. The force now arrayed against Coimbatore consisted of eight thousand regular infantry, with fourteen guns, four mortars, and a large body of irregulars and horse. It was commanded by Kummer-oo-Deen. The enemy took possession of the pettah without opposition, erected batteries, and opened approaches, under the cover of a heavy fire, which the besieged were able to return very inadequately. But the spirits of the garrison were cheered by intelligence that Major Cuppage was advancing with three battalions of Company's sepoys, two of Travancoreans, and six field-pieces, to compel the enemy to raise the siege. To divert this force from its object, and probably at the same time to strike a serious blow at the efficiency of an important portion of the English force, Kummer-oo-deen, leaving a strong

CHAP. XIV. body in the trenches, marched with the remainder of his force a distance of about ten miles, to the vicinity of a pass where the woods of Arivally terminate and the plain commences. A large convoy of oxen, intended for the western army, was assembled at Palagaut, and Kummer-oo-Deen made a demonstration of getting into Major Cuppage's rear, for the purpose of occupying the pass. This would have enabled him to cut off the passage of the convoy, and by the force of numbers to embarrass Major Cuppage's return to Palagaut. That officer accordingly fell back, and the occupation of the pass was decided by a severe action, in which Major Cuppage was victorious. He immediately returned to Palagaut, while Kummer-oo-Deen proceeded to resume the siege of Coimbatore, relieved from the fear of interruption.

The fate of that place was now sealed. All hope of relief was cut off, the ammunition, from the first, bad, was nearly expended, a wide breach had been made perfectly practicable, and the sap had been carried to the covered way. Lieutenants Chalmers and Nash were both wounded in one day; and the most determined of the gallant defenders of this miserable fort saw the necessity of surrender. Negotiations for this purpose were commenced, and soon brought to a conclusion, the enemy being quite ready to grant the besieged favourable terms. The place was
A. D. 1791. first invested on the 13th of June; one hundred and forty-three days afterwards, on the 3rd of November, the conquerors took possession of it. In reference

to its strength or importance, Coimbatore has little claim to occupy a large space in the history of the war with Tippoo Sultan; but the gallantry with which it was defended has removed the siege from the list of ordinary occurrences.

It was a condition of the capitulation that the garrison should be permitted to march to Palagaut; but, after the actual surrender of the place, it was pretended that this condition could not be acted upon without the Sultan's ratification. The sequel of this tale of perfidy need scarcely be told. After a detention of thirteen days at Coimbatore, the prisoners were marched to Seringapatam, where they were subjected to the cruelties and indignities which were the ordinary lot of those who fell into the hands of the barbarian Tippoo Sultan. Comment upon a fact of such frequent occurrence would be alike tedious and vain.

While these events were in progress, the attention of Lord Cornwallis had been constantly directed to the establishment of such means for the transmission of supplies as might prevent the necessity of abandoning the meditated attack upon Seringapatam from the cause that led to the relinquishment of the former. One of the most serious impediments to success was the possession by the enemy of the strong fortress of Savandroog, situated about eighteen miles west of Bangalore. It consisted of an enormous mass of granite, of greater height than Nundedroog, rising from a base eight miles in circumference, and separated by a

CHAP. XIV. chasm, at the distance of about two-thirds of its total elevation, into two citadels, each independent of the other. It had not long before been reconnoitred, and was deemed unassailable; but the capture of some other hill forts, and more especially of Nundedroog, had tended to diminish the reverence of English officers for the reputed impregnability of Indian fortresses; and it was determined to test the claims of Savandroog in this respect.

The conduct of the siege was entrusted to Colonel Stuart, and the force assigned to him, in addition to a powerful artillery, consisted of two European and three native regiments. The remainder of the army was disposed so as to watch every avenue from Seringapatam by which the operations of the siege could be disturbed. On the 10th of
A.D. 1791. December Colonel Stuart pitched his camp within three miles of the north side of the rock, the point from which the chief engineer, after reconnoitering, proposed to carry on the attack. The first operation was one of vast labour and difficulty—it was to cut a gun road from the encampment to the foot of the mountain, over rocky precipices, and through a thick forest of bamboos, and when made, to drag the guns over it. A noxious and pestilential atmosphere added to the dangers of the besiegers, and Tippoo, on hearing of the attempt, is reported to have congratulated his officers on the infatuation of the English in engaging in an enterprise that could not fail to terminate in defeat and disgrace. According to the Sultan's belief, one

half of the Europeans employed were destined to die of sickness,* the other half to be killed in the attack. Not daunted by this royal prediction, the besiegers, on the 17th December, opened two batteries, one at a thousand yards, the other at seven hundred yards' distance, by which the defences of the wall were much damaged; but the effect was scarcely equal to the expectations which had been formed. The wall was built with stones of immense size, those of the lower tier being riveted to the rock by iron bolts. On the 19th another battery was erected, which it was found necessary to advance to within two hundred and fifty yards of the wall. In the course of that and the succeeding day a practicable breach was effected, and orders were given to storm on the following morning. A. D. 1791.

The bamboo forest, which had been a source of difficulty in the construction of the gun-road, was found of some service in the close approaches of the attack. Under its cover, and that of crevices and rugged parts of the rock, a lodgement was made for the troops within twenty yards of the breach. The storming party, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Nesbitt, was directed to four different attacks, and parties were detached round the mountain, to draw the attention of the enemy from the main object, and prevent their escape, should any attempt for that purpose be made.

* Major Dirom states that the place "is said to have derived its name of Savandroog, or the rock of death, from its fatal climate."

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The hour fixed for the assault was eleven o'clock, and it was to commence on the discharge of two guns from the batteries. At the appointed hour the expected signal was given, and the party advanced to the storm, while the band of one of the English regiments pealed forth the inspiring air of *Britons strike home.* A large body of the enemy had been observed running down from the western hill, for the defence of the breach, which was a little below the eastern hill, but on the appearance of the English they were seized with panic and fled. The eastern hill was completely carried, without meeting or even overtaking the enemy.

The attack on the western hill was thought to be a work of greater difficulty, and Captain Monson, to whom it was entrusted, was instructed either to advance or not, as circumstances might render expedient. The officer in command of the citadel having witnessed the abandonment of the eastern hill and the ascent of the English party, made a sally for the purpose of taking them in flank, when he was unexpectedly met among the rocks by the party of Captain Monson. He retreated with precipitation, followed with great vigour by the English. An attempt was made to shut the first gate against the pursuers, but the man who was performing the duty was killed by a shot fired from some distance by a sergeant of the 71st regiment. The English then rushed in, and entering every succeeding barrier with the enemy, were soon in possession of the top of the mountain. Thus, in less than an hour, and in open day, the stu-

pendous fortress of Savandroog was carried by storm, and the boast of its impregnability for ever silenced. The English had not a man killed, and only one wounded. CHAP. XIV.

The next place attempted was that which was next to Savandroog in strength and importance. Ootradroog had some time before been summoned, and the answer of the killadar was, that he would not surrender his post till the English had taken Seringapatam. It was supposed that the fall of Savandroog might have made him less scrupulous, and a flag of truce was dispatched, offering liberal terms. The staff officer who accompanied it was beckoned from the fort to advance; he complied with the invitation, and when within sixty yards of the gate, a fire of musketry was opened on him and the non-commissioned officer who bore the flag, but from which, happily, both escaped unhurt. On the following day the fort was attacked in a manner for which the governor was not prepared. A number of field-pieces were run down to appointed stations, and under cover of their fire an escalade commenced.

The side of the rock assaulted rose at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, and was defended by seven ramparts rising above each other, including that of the pettah, which was first stormed. The orders given to the artillery officers were, as fast as one wall should be carried, to point the guns, over the heads of the assailants, against the next wall in succession, for the purpose of keeping down the fire of

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the garrison. The pettah was carried so rapidly as to astonish the killadar, and induce him to demand a parley. It was granted; but it soon becoming apparent, from the movements of the garrison above, that the only object was to gain time for preparing more efficiently for defence, the assault recommenced, and wall after wall was carried, till the assailants reached the summit. Some of the gateways were forced by the pioneers, but most of the ramparts were carried by escalade. The astonishment and confusion of the enemy were so great, that their fire, though heavy, was for the most part thrown away, and as soon as a single European was seen above any of the walls they fled precipitately. The killadar was made prisoner, and many of the garrison killed. Many more, terrified at the sight of the European bayonets, precipitated themselves from the rock—thus blindly rushing on one mode of death in their anxiety to escape another. The terror of the garrison had commenced before the actual danger. On the appearance of the detachment before the place they had mutinied, and four hundred men had deserted in the night. To the prevalence of fear the English were unquestionably indebted for the ease with which they obtained possession of this fortress. "Although," says Major Dirom, "such was the steepness and narrowness of some parts of the road in the ascent, that a few resolute men might have defended the place against an army, it was only at the last gateway that they attempted any resistance, and that only by firing a few musket-shot, by

which two soldiers were wounded."* The total number of wounded in the English detachment was very small, and, like Savandroog, Ootradroog was carried without the loss of a single life. Some other forts of inferior importance were taken with little trouble.

The army of the Nizam had long been engaged in besieging Goorumconda, but with a very indifferent prospect of bringing their operations to a successful ending. The Nizam's artillery was unable to breach the lower fort, and to supply their deficiency some guns were dispatched by Lord Cornwallis after the fall of Nundedroog. Still nothing was effected till Captain Read, who commanded the English detachment serving with the Nizam's army, rendered weary and indignant by the clumsy proceedings which he had been compelled to witness, offered, if entrusted with the exclusive management of the attack, to put the Nizam's officers in possession of the lower fort, which commanded the only access to the hill, and having effected this service, to leave them to conduct the further operations in their own way. The offer was accepted; and Captain Read having constructed a battery of two twenty-six and two eighteen-pounders, within four hundred yards of the wall, in two days after it commenced firing had effected a practicable breach.

The night of the 7th of November was fixed on for the attack; and the small party of artillerymen, who were the only European troops with the de- A. D. 179

* Major Dirom's Narrative, page 75.

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tachment, volunteered to quit their guns and lead the assault. Measures having been taken to divert the attention of the enemy, the assailants advanced, and with little opposition mounted the breach. Having cleared the obstacles by which their progress was impeded, they advanced along the rampart till they met a body of the enemy, who made a stand at the second bastion. The artillerymen charged them, and they instantly gave way. No further resistance was offered, and the greater part of the garrison took refuge in the upper fort. The lower fort was delivered to the charge of Nizam Ali's troops, but they were not destined to retain undisturbed possession of it. A large reinforcement, soon after the capture, arrived from Hyderabad, under the command of the minister, Moosheer-oo-Moolk, who, on his departure with the main body of his forces and the English detachment to take part in the operations of Lord Cornwallis, left the charge of the lower fort to an officer of some reputation,

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known by the name of Hafiz Jee. In December, the eldest son of Tippoo Sultan appeared before Goorumconda, with an army amounting to about twelve thousand horse and foot. Their approach was quite unlooked for; and Hafiz, supposing the party to consist but of a few plunderers, mounted an elephant and went out to reconnoitre, accompanied by only a few horsemen. He was speedily surrounded; and descending from his elephant, was about to mount a horse and endeavour to force his way back, when he was made prisoner. The

troops who issued from the fort in small parties were destroyed in detail, and panic seizing the rest, the recent acquisition was precipitately evacuated with considerable loss. Hafiz Jee was an object of peculiar hatred to Tippoo. He had been employed on an embassy from the Nizam to the Sultan, by whom he had been treated with that disrespect which the despot of Mysore was in the habit of exhibiting to the accredited servants of other states. He had afterwards, in his capacity of minister of the Nizam, been associated with the refusal of that prince to connect his family with that of Tippoo by the tie of marriage, and this offence had never been forgiven. Aly Reza, the man through whom the rejected proposal of matrimonial alliance had been made, was now with the army before Goorumconda, and in his hands rested the fate of Hafiz Jee. The prisoner had soon the means of judging of the spirit in which he was regarded by those into whose power his imprudence had thrown him. He was plundered of every thing about his person, even to the last article of clothing; and, but for the charity of some one who bestowed on him an old quilt, he would have been left altogether destitute of covering. In this forlorn condition he was visited by his old antagonist, Aly Reza, who reproached him with his conduct respecting the proffered marriage. Hafiz answered, that he and Aly Reza were then serving their respective masters, and that the day was past. The remembrance of it was, however, not past. The victim was in the power of a prince who never

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forgot an injury—in the presence of one of his minions ready to perform any act which he believed would be gratifying to his master, and who in this instance was influenced by feelings of personal hatred. Hafiz was carried to a concealed situation, fitted for the execution of dark and bloody deeds, and there murdered with circumstances of extreme barbarity, Aly Reza feasting his eyes with the vengeance inflicted on his opponent. The success of the attack upon Goorumconda was further signalized by the murder of a French officer in the service of the Nizam; and thus the triumph of Tippoo's army was celebrated by acts of treachery and cruelty, which Tippoo himself need not have disdained to superintend.* The advantage, whatever it might be, resulting from these murders, was nearly all that Tippoo gained by the recapture of the lower fort of Goorumconda, which was speedily restored to the Nizam by the English detachment.

The Mahratta army under Purseram Bhow, with a British detachment under Captain Little, had, on leaving Lord Cornwallis, proceeded to attack a fort named Dooradroog. The Mahratta general had anticipated that it would surrender without opposition; but, after repeated attempts, its reduction was found impracticable, and the army continued its march towards Chittledroog. That place was

* The folly of Hafiz Jee subjected him, in spite of the unfortunate consequences to himself, to a suspicion of having entered into treasonable connection with the enemy. There appears, however, no ground for charging him with any thing beyond extreme indiscretion.

reconnoitred, but deemed too strong for attack. Purseram Bhow entertained some hope of buying over the killadar; but either that officer's honesty, or the fact that his family were detained in Seringapatam as hostages for his fidelity, forbade the conclusion of a bargain. Purseram Bhow consoled himself for the disappointment by plundering whenever opportunity presented. The illness, real or pretended, of the Mahratta general, delayed for a time the progress of the army; but on the 18th of December they arrived near Hooly Onore, a fort which Captain Little immediately proceeded to reconnoitre. It was thought that it might be attacked with a prospect of success. The pettah was gained with little difficulty, and thence some guns opened on the fort, at a distance of a hundred and fifty yards. A breach having been effected, the fort was stormed with success, and without the loss of a man, on the same day which, with similar immunity from loss, transferred the important fortress of Savandroog into the possession of the English. The garrison was reported to be a thousand strong, but Lieutenant Moor, who was one of Captain Little's detachment, concludes that they did not exceed half that number. Assuming their strength at this reduced estimate, that officer, however, makes a remark, the truth of which is in no degree invalidated by the colloquial simplicity with which it is conveyed, that "they ought to have been ashamed of themselves for making so pitiful a defence."* It

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* Lieutenant Moor's Narrative, page 146.

CHAP. XIV. was the intention of the stormers not to allow any of the Mahratta looties* to enter the place; but the news of its capture was soon carried to their camp, and though the gates were shut, the ladders removed from the breach, and every precaution taken to exclude access, these marauders found means to penetrate, and, like noxious and destructive insects, to spread themselves over the place. They set fire to the houses, and the work of devastation and plunder soon became general. Seeing no other chance of securing any thing, the English commander permitted his people to disperse and plunder also. But this was soon stopped by the arrival of orders from the Mahratta general for the English party to quit the place, and as they were placed under his control, the orders could not be disobeyed. The English troops, who had won the prize, were thus deprived of all participation in it, while the Mahrattas, who had not contributed in even the slightest degree to the fall of the fort, were left to gratify, without restraint, their insatiable appetite for plunder. Purseram Bhow, however, indulged in the luxury of a speculative admiration of virtue, though he left the practice to others. A family of some note in the town had received the protection of an officer of the English detachment; but though their own safety was thus provided for, they were deeply distressed by the loss of a youthful daughter, who, in the confusion, had been separated from her parents. Through the exertions of the officer by whom they

* Plunderers.

had been protected, the girl was found and restored to her relatives. These circumstances reached the ears of Purseram Bhow, who, says Lieutenant Moor, "mentioned them in full durbar, in a manner highly honourable to himself and the British character;" further, he recommended the example to the imitation of his own servants, and there can be little doubt that the recommendation was received with a degree of respect equal to the sincerity with which it was given. CHAP. XI.

After the fall of Hooly Onore, the Mahratta army and Captain Little's detachment proceeded in a south-western direction towards Simoga. Tippoo had strengthened his provincial troops in Bednore by the addition of a division under his relation Reza Saib, and that officer was thus enabled to take the field with a force of eight thousand men and ten guns. This force was posted in the jungle, with the intention of making an attack on the rear of the confederates, as soon as they should be engaged in the siege of Simoga, simultaneously with a sortie to be made from the fort. This being known, it became an object of importance to dislodge them previously. The position of Reza Saib was strong; his right rested on the river, his front was covered by a deep ravine, and his left by jungle, deemed impenetrable there, but which became somewhat lighter at a distance.

The force destined to the attack upon Reza Saib was composed of about a thousand English sepoys, with four guns and five hundred Mahratta infantry.

CHAP. XIV. Three thousand Mahratta horse were posted near the place of attack, but from the nature of the ground they could be of little use. The enemy's position being strongest in front, it was thought expedient to detach parties to attack them on the right and left; but the main attack, led by Captain Little, was directed to the centre. On the part of the English, the contest was maintained, under great disadvantages, with distinguished spirit. The Mahratta infantry sometimes charged when they saw the enemy appearing to give way, but they were invariably beaten back, and their disorderly return increased the difficulties with which the British officers had to contend. At length the enemy, being driven from their posts on the left, and three of their guns taken, began to retreat; and Captain Little, collecting all the force that could be mustered, set forward in pursuit. There was but one road through the jungle, and before five miles had been traversed, the English commander came up with the enemy's remaining guns, seven in number, which he captured; but so far from relaxing in the pursuit, he continued it through the whole of the following day, and the result was the entire dispersion of the corps of Reza Saib. The departure of Captain Little and his troops left the enemy's camp to the care of the Mahrattas; and here those warriors, who shrunk from the fire of retreating men, found a field precisely adapted to their genius. The amount of plunder was enormous, and such a quantity of arms fell into the hands of the captors, that in the bazaar good muskets were offered for sale at

two rupees each. By some accounts, the force of Reza Saib is stated at ten thousand infantry and a thousand horse, and the lowest estimate fixes the number of infantry at seven thousand. This, posted in a most advantageous position, was defeated by about a thousand English sepoys, for the Mahratta troops cannot be regarded as having contributed any thing to the success of the day; they were rather an incumbrance than a support. By military writers this action has been regarded as one of the most brilliant of the war.*

The army of Reza Saib being dispersed, Captain Little prepared to prosecute the siege of Simoga. A battery of five guns, after a day's firing, effected a practicable breach. All was ready for the storm, when an offer of capitulation upon terms was made and accepted. The commander of the fort duly appreciated the value of Mahratta faith, for it was thought necessary to stipulate, not only that private property should be respected, but that the inhabitants should be considered under the protection of the British, who were to guarantee the treaty and take possession of the fort. These conditions were to continue in effect only until the English detachment retired from the vicinity. On its march to the southward, the custody of the fort was transferred to the Mahrattas; and also the charge of some prisoners of rank, who, within the English camp, had been treated with marked attention and kindness,

* Such is the opinion expressed by Major Dirom and Colonel Wilks.

CHAP. XIV. and been totally exempted from restraint. A short time after the change, these prisoners were seen by some officers who had known them in the English camp: their condition was wretched. They had been plundered of every thing valuable, and receiving neither money nor subsistence, they had been compelled to sell their clothes to procure the means of sustaining life. Some officers of inferior rank were in one respect better treated — they received an allowance, but to counterbalance this advantage they were kept in irons. Such is Mahratta faith and Mahratta humanity.

Purseram Bhow was to have joined Lord Cornwallis with all dispatch before Seringapatam. Instead of this, he preferred a plundering expedition into Bednore; but being alarmed by the approach of a force sent against him by Tippoo, under the command of Kummer-oo-Deen, who had retaken Samoga, he determined to perform his engagement with the British governor-general, since no advantage seemed likely to accrue from taking any other course.

It is now necessary to return to the British army under Lord Cornwallis, which was at Ootradroog, awaiting the coming up of some artillery, some stores, and a battering train, as well as the expected junction of the army of the Nizam. These objects being accomplished, the combined army commenced
A. D. 1792. its march, and on the 5th of February Lord Cornwallis was once more in sight of Seringapatam, and of Tippoo's army encamped under its walls.

On both sides of the river, opposite to the island of Seringapatam, a large space is enclosed by a bound hedge, which marks the limits of the capital, and affords a place of refuge from the incursions of cavalry. On the north side, the enclosure was occupied by Tippoo's army. Within it were several redoubts, one of which, erected on a commanding eminence, was a post of great strength. There were other works calculated to shield his troops from attack, or facilitate retreat in case of necessity, and his front line was defended by a hundred pieces of heavy cannon. In the fort and island which formed his second line there were not fewer than three hundred pieces of cannon. Reconnaissance having been made, Lord Cornwallis determined to attack the enemy on the night of the 6th February, an event quite unexpected by Tippoo, and the apparent temerity of which, seeing that it was to be performed by infantry alone, without guns, filled the allies with astonishment. The attack was made in three columns. Between ten and eleven o'clock the central column on its advance encountered the enemy's grand guard, a body of cavalry, who were approaching with rockets to disturb the English camp, which annoyance they had practised on the preceding night. The horsemen immediately galloped off to their lines, leaving the bearers of the rockets to harass the column and endeavour to impede its march. Many rockets were thrown, but they had little effect beyond that of announcing to the enemy the approach of the British column. The

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CHAP. XIV. front division, on being discovered, pushed briskly forward, reached the hedge, and entered the enemy's lines about a quarter of an hour after their approach became known.

The left column, when the rocketing commenced, was ascending the Carigaut Hill, an eminence on the right of the enemy's camp, near the termination of the bound hedge. The hill is steep, and of great height; it commands one of the fords and the eastern part of the island, and protected the right wing of the Sultan's camp. This post was justly regarded as of great importance, and proportionate care had been taken to strengthen it; it was defended by a double breast-work in front of a stone redoubt, but the work was not entirely completed: a considerable body of infantry, but without artillery, was stationed upon it. The Carigaut Hill terminates the range over which Colonel Maxwell had chased a corps of the enemy at the battle in the month of May preceding. The same officer now commanded the column directed to this point, and the works were scaled by the flank companies of the 72nd, the regiment by which the hill was stormed on the former occasion.

The right column, under General Medows, was to attack the left of the enemy's position. From some mistake, it was led to a more distant point than was intended, and was consequently later in reaching the hedge than the central column; but about half-past eleven this column also entered the enclosure, and proceeded to attack a redoubt within the enemy's

lines, but not included in the course of operations contemplated by Lord Cornwallis, and which, after a severe conflict, was carried. It was intended that the right column should advance to meet the central column, and then await further orders. General Medows, accordingly, having left a sufficient force for the defence of the captured post, proceeded to move in a direction which he expected to bring him to the spot marked out for him; but the occurrence of rice swamps compelled him to make a larger circuit than had been anticipated, and thus the track of the central column was missed. No firing being heard, it was conceived that all was past, and that, whether the other columns had gained a victory or sustained a defeat, it was too late to render them any assistance.

The central column, the advance of which has already been noticed, was subdivided into three parts. The front subdivision, after forcing the enemy's line, was to pass into the island with the fugitives. Orders were issued to the captains of the leading companies not to suffer themselves to be delayed in the camp, but to push with all possible expedition to the great ford near the north-east angle of the fort. Each captain was held responsible for his own company; as success was more dependent upon the celerity than solidity of the movement. The second, or central subdivision, after clearing the right of the camp, was to follow into the island. The third, in the rear, formed a reserve under Lord Cornwallis, who took up a posi-

CHAP. XIV. tion where he might support the other parts of the column, and wait the co-operation of the right and left divisions under General Medows and Colonel Maxwell.

The front subdivision, having forced the bound hedge under a heavy but ill-directed fire of cannon and musketry, advanced steadily, the enemy receding before them. The leading companies pushed for the river, passing the Sultan's tent, which appeared to have been abandoned with much precipitation.* The advanced companies, partly from the badness of the ground, partly from the nature of the duty which they had to execute, were soon separated into two bodies. The first that reached the river crossed under the very walls of the fort without opposition; and "had it not been found," says Major Dirom, "that the east gate of Seringapatam was shut and the bridge drawn up, that night might have put an end to the war; as Captain Lindsay pushed into the sortie (the entrance which leads through the glacis into the fort), in hope of entering the gates with the fugitives."† This party proceeded along the glacis through an extensive bazaar, destroying numbers of the enemy, and dispersing several

* Many things of value were scattered about in confusion, and among other articles was found a set of mathematical instruments of London manufacture. Tippoo affected, and to a certain extent acquired, the reputation of a man of science. His library contained a translation of Euclid, and several other works on geometry; but Colonel Wilks estimates his mathematical attainments at a very low rate.

† Narrative, page 154.

bodies of horse; they then took post, part at a bridge over a canal running nearly across the island, part at a redoubt commanding the southern ford.

The second body crossed by the same ford which their companions had passed a few minutes before. Their passage was considerably impeded by the rush of the enemy towards the island, but no attempt was made at resistance. On reaching the opposite bank, they turned to the left, and advanced for about a mile to the western gate of the pettah. It was shut, but was soon forced open; the troops stationed for its defence having, on the first alarm, rushed out to man the lines and batteries on the river. The firing from these lines and batteries informed the British party that the right of the enemy's camp had been penetrated, and it was concluded that the assailants were probably attempting to force their passage into the island. Three parties were detached to aid the operation, by taking the batteries in reverse, while Colonel Knox, who commanded this portion of the advanced companies, having taken possession of the street which led to the batteries, remained at the gateway with about thirty men, either to support any of the parties who might receive a check, or to resist any attempt by the enemy to recover possession of the pettah. But the enemy were too much confounded even to maintain what was still in their possession. The lines and batteries, which were all open to the rear, were abandoned, and those by whom they should have been defended dispersed in confusion. From one of the terrified fugitives who

CHAP. XIV. was made prisoner, Colonel Knox received information that some Europeans were confined in a house at no great distance; and to this circumstance twenty-seven miserable, half-starved men, some of whom had passed years of captivity in heavy irons, owed their release.

Seven battalions of Europeans and three of sepoys passed the river at a period subsequent to the passage of the two parties whose course has been detailed, and by another ford, which brought them to the Sultan's garden; they forced the gate and entered. Captain Hunter, who commanded this party, was not aware that any other troops had passed into the island; he therefore took post, resolved to wait for intelligence or orders to direct his movements. He remained for two hours without learning any thing. The dawn of morning was not far distant, and after daylight he knew that his post would not be tenable; he perceived, also, a body of the enemy on the opposite bank, with two field-pieces, which he apprehended they intended to open on his party. This decided his course; and quitting the garden, he rushed with his men into the river, which he passed under a heavy fire, attacked the party with the guns before they had time to unlimber them, and thence made his way through the camp to the reserve under Lord Cornwallis.

The second subdivision of the central column passed to the left, as intended, for the purpose of breaking the right wing of the enemy's army. On approaching the Sultan's redoubt its progress was

opposed by a large body of horse. They were received by a volley, delivered with great steadiness and precision; and when the smoke cleared away, the horse were seen at a distance scattered over the field. The Sultan's redoubt was found abandoned; and this being occupied by a party detached for the purpose, the remainder moved on to co-operate with the column under Colonel Maxwell.

The rear division of the central column, which was under the immediate command of Lord Cornwallis, was formed near the Sultan's redoubt, and there it waited in anxious expectation of being joined by General Medows. He came not; but, at a moment when a reinforcement was most desirable, the troops under Captain Hunter, who had just recrossed the river from the Sultan's garden, made their appearance. They had scarcely time to replace their ammunition (their cartridges having been damaged by the water), before a large body of troops, forming part of Tippoo's centre and left, having recovered from their panic, advanced to attack the force under Lord Cornwallis. The attack was vigorously made and bravely resisted. The fire of the enemy was well returned, and on a nearer approach, they were met and driven back by the bayonet. Their numbers, however, were overwhelming; and, in the confidence that from this cause victory must finally be theirs, they repeatedly renewed the attack, and were as often repulsed. The danger to which the small force with the governor-general was exposed increased his anxiety for the arrival of the aid which he had so long expected;

CHAP. XIV. and he is reported to have said, "If General Medows be above ground, this will bring him." General Medows was above ground, but he did not arrive in time to render any service to the commander-in-chief. The repetition of the enemy's attacks continued for nearly two hours, when they finally withdrew. To secure his troops from being surrounded, Lord Cornwallis then moved to the Carigaut Hill, at the foot of which he was met by the division of General Medows.

The progress of the left column remains to be noticed. After gaining the Carigaut Hill, and occupying the works upon it, this column continued its course towards the enemy's camp, under a galling fire from a party sheltered by a tank. Passing through the camp, it was met by the central portion of Lord Cornwallis's division, under Colonel Stuart. It was now desired to find a convenient spot to pass the river. A small party crossed at a point where the water reached to the necks of the men, and where they were exposed to a heavy fire from the lines and batteries on the island. Their ammunition was unavoidably damped in the passage, and when they gained the opposite bank they were without a single cartridge fit for use. Happily they were not in immediate necessity, for at this moment the enemy were driven from the lines and batteries by the parties dispatched by Captain Knox from the pettah. A more practicable part of the river having been discovered, the remainder of the column passed over, and a junction was effected with the

detached companies from Lord Cornwallis's division which had crossed at an earlier period. The morning of the 7th of February thus found within the pettah of Seringapatam the left column and part of the central column of the British force, which had moved on the preceding night; the right column, and the remainder of the centre, being on the Carigaut Hill. CHAP. XIV. A. D. 1792.

It is natural to inquire, where was the Sultan while his camp was traversed by a hostile force? He had just finished his evening meal when the alarm reached him: he hastily rose and mounted, but waited the arrival of accurate intelligence as to the nature of the attack, before taking any measures to repel it.

The first precise information was received from a mass of fugitives, who, rushing from the bayonets of the English, announced to the astonished Sultan that his centre had been penetrated. The terror of the informants but too well attested the truth of their report; of which, moreover, the Sultan was soon assured by the evidence of his own senses. In the pale moonlight he perceived a lengthened column of the English army passing through the heart of his camp, and making their way to the main ford, the possession of which would cut off his retreat. There was not a moment to be lost; and Tippoo, departing with all practicable speed, had just time to clear the head of the English column, many of his attendants being killed by the advanced company. Tippoo gained the ford, passed it, and

CHAP. XIV. making directly for the east gate of the city, was once more in safety within the walls of his capital. It will be recollected that Captain Lindsay made a push to enter this gate, but found it shut. When Captain Lindsay appeared before the gate, only a few minutes could have elapsed from the entrance of the Sultan.

Next in importance to the danger to which he was personally exposed, Tippoo in all probability estimated that in which a large amount of treasure
A.D. 1792. was placed. The 6th of February was the day for issuing pay to the troops. The required amount had been counted out to each buckshee,* but the issue to the men was not to take place till the following day; and in the meantime the respective sums remained in the custody of the treasurer, in bags bearing his own seal and that of the buckshee to whom they belonged. On the first alarm of an attack, the treasurer began to load his charge upon camels with all possible dispatch. Musket-balls soon began to pass around him, and by one of them he was severely wounded. He continued, however, to proceed with his work, and completed it. The camels were loaded, and driven across the ford, intermingled with the British troops and the flying servants of Tippoo. They reached the bank in safety; and the undaunted treasurer, conducting his caravan for a considerable distance along the glacis, entered the city by the Mysore gate, and had the satisfaction of depositing his charge in security, without the loss of a single rupee.

* Paymaster.

The spirit of this courageous and persevering man was not shared by all the followers of the Sultan. As is usual, when misfortune overtakes an eastern army, a great number of the troops deserted. They passed away in crowds, and the reports of the morning after the attack presented a total of twenty-three thousand killed, wounded, and missing—the last class contributing in by far the largest proportion to swell the amount. The treasurer, who had so perseveringly protected his master's chest, recommended the proclamation of a further issue of pay, as a probable mode of bringing the fugitives back. The suggestion shewed a perfect acquaintance with the character of his countrymen, but the plan was not successful. Fear was more powerful than cupidity, and very few of the wanderers returned. While the native followers of Tippoo were thus deserting him by multitudes, a number of Europeans, principally Frenchmen, who had long served him and his father, took the opportunity of quitting a service of which they were weary. Among them was a man named Blevètte, whose departure was a serious loss to the Sultan, as he possessed considerable skill in fortification, and had actually constructed the redoubts the credit of which was claimed and enjoyed by Tippoo.

Discouraging as were the circumstances under which Tippoo had to renew the contest, he could not decline it. As the day advanced, the guns of the fort opened on such of the British troops as were within their range, and portions of the scattered

CHAP. XIV. remains of the enemy's force began to re-assemble. Colonel Stuart, who, as the senior officer, had assumed the command of all the British troops on the island, had taken advantage of the daylight to remove to a position better adapted than that which he had occupied during the night, for keeping up a communication with the force which remained with Lord Cornwallis. He had scarcely effected this change, when his men were fired upon by a body of the enemy's infantry, which had advanced under cover of some old houses and walls. The British troops were in a considerable degree sheltered, but part of their ammunition having been damaged in passing the river, and much of the remainder expended during the night, they returned the fire but faintly, till the arrival of a supply of ammunition and a reinforcement of men, which Lord Cornwallis dispatched to their assistance. The enemy then drew off.

This attack was no sooner repulsed than the attention of the English on the island was directed to the Sultan's redoubt, which the enemy were now making the most determined efforts to regain. The party within it consisted of somewhat less than a hundred Europeans and about fifty sepoys, commanded by Captain Sibbald, of the 71st regiment. In defence of the redoubt, the first object was to shut up the gorge, which was open towards the fort. An attempt to effect this was made by throwing across some broken litters and the carriage of a gun. This being perceived from the fort, three guns immedi-

ately opened from thence upon the gorge, and two field-pieces were sent to some adjacent rocks, the fire of which was directed to the same point. By these means the inefficient barrier was soon shattered into splinters, and considerable injury done to the works. The gorge being clear, the enemy, about ten o'clock, advanced to assault. They were beaten back, but with considerable loss; and soon after they had retired, a cannon-shot deprived the party in the redoubt of their commander, Captain Sibbald. Major Skelly, one of Lord Cornwallis's aide-de-camps, who had been dispatched to this spot on some special duty, now took the command, but found the probability of protracting the defence greatly diminished by the prospect of an approaching want of ammunition. While meditating the best means of husbanding the small stock that remained, Major Skelly was informed that two loaded bullocks had wandered into the ditch, and that it was supposed they were part of those which had been appointed for the carriage of spare ammunition. The conjecture was right. The animals were soon released of their lading; and these stray bullocks, with their unsightly burdens, "were," says Major Dirom, "more precious to the major and his party at this juncture, than if they had been loaded with the richest jewels in Tippoo's treasury."

Scarcely had the men filled their cartridge-boxes from this unlooked-for supply, when a fresh attempt was made on the redoubt. The Sultan had been greatly disappointed by the ill success of the former

CHAP. XIV. attack, and had passionately demanded if he had no faithful servants to retrieve his honour. There was little alacrity in responding to the Sultan's call; but, after some hesitation, a body of cavalry was found to volunteer their services, in fulfilment of the wishes of their prince. About one o'clock they advanced towards the redoubt in compact order, two thousand strong. At first it appeared as though they intended to charge at once into the gorge; but they suddenly stopped, just beyond musket-shot, and four hundred of them dismounting, rushed impetuously forward, to force the entrance with their sabres. The gorge had been necessarily kept clear during the continuance of the cannonade; but when it ceased, by reason of the approach of the assailants, the garrison formed across the opening, while the portion of the parapet which bore on the enemy was also fully manned. Their fire was coolly reserved till it could be given with effect, and by the first discharge the leading part of the column was completely brought down. Recovering from the momentary hesitation caused by the fall of their comrades, those behind again began to advance; but the steady and rapid fire of the garrison threw them into confusion, and, regardless of the Sultan's appeal and their answer to it, they fled to their horses and soon disappeared, their retreat being covered by the firing from the fort and the rocks.

After the repose of an hour the garrison were threatened by another attack. It was led by the Sul-

tan's European corps, commanded by M. Vigie. This corps had been engaged in part of the operations of the preceding night, and being brought into a situation of some danger, it broke, and officers and men alike sought safety in disorderly flight. Their object was facilitated by the uniform of the corps being red; and M. Vigie himself rode quietly through one of the British columns, no one interrupting him, in consequence of his being mistaken for a British officer. The behaviour of this corps at the redoubt did not tend to obliterate the disgrace of their previous flight. The garrison were prepared for a conflict far more severe than those which they had already sustained; but the expectations founded on the supposed superiority of this corps to the native troops were not realized. M. Vigie and his men advanced but a little way from the rocks, when two or three of the foremost falling, the rest came to a stand, fell into great disorder, and went off. CHAP. XIV.

No further attempt was made on the redoubt; and never was relief more welcome than that afforded to the garrison by the cessation of the enemy's attacks. The day had been oppressively sultry, and within the narrow limits which bounded the efforts of the garrison two officers and nineteen privates lay dead; while three officers and twenty-two privates, miserably wounded, were passionately imploring water, which their companions had not to bestow, there not being within the place a single drop. Thus surrounded within by death and suffering, exposed without to the attacks of a vast army sup-

CHAP. XIV. ported by the guns of a well-appointed fort, did this gallant band maintain, not their post only, but their own honour and that of the country which they served. Great were their labours and their difficulties, but brilliant and unfading is the glory by which they were compensated.

So long as the enemy's attention had been directed to the redoubt, no attempt had been made upon any other of the British posts. But about five o'clock two heavy columns entered the pettah, and driving before them some followers of the British camp who had dispersed in search of plunder, advanced in the direction of the lines of Colonel Stuart, throwing rockets as they proceeded. A detachment being sent to meet them, they retired for a short distance; but their numbers were greater than had been anticipated, and the officer commanding the British detachment applied for further assistance. A reinforcement being obtained, the work of clearing the pettah of the presence of the enemy was not of long duration. They were rapidly driven from street to street, and finally forced to retire altogether. A prisoner taken in the course of the conflict reported that Tippoo had convened his principal officers, and exhorted them to make a bold effort to drive the English from the island, and recover the tomb of Hyder Ali; that the chiefs had thereupon placed their turbans on the ground, and sworn to succeed or perish in the attempt. The attack, the prisoner added, was to be made that night, and the march of the assailants was to be directed along the

bank of the northern branch of the river to turn the right flank of the British line, and to cut off the communication with the camp. The account was so circumstantial that it appeared deserving of credit—at least, it would have been imprudent to disregard it. Arrangements were accordingly made for effectually repelling an attack, should any be made. The force in possession of the pettah was strengthened by the addition of four field-pieces to their means of defence, and the troops lay on their arms throughout the night. It passed, however, without alarm; and the morning shewed the whole of the redoubts north of the river abandoned. The English camp was thereupon advanced as near to the bound hedge as was practicable, picquets were sent into the deserted redoubts, and a chain of posts completed along the north and east faces of the fort, converting the enemy's fortified camp and works into lines of countervallation for the attack of his capital. "The proud city of Seringapatam," says Major Dirom, "which we could scarcely discern from our first ground, was now in forty-eight hours strongly and closely invested on its two principal sides; the enemy's army broken and dispirited; ours in perfect order, and highly animated by their success."

Preparations for a siege were commenced without delay. A little to the eastward of the pettah was a garden of great extent, containing the tomb of Hyder Ali and a new palace erected by Tippoo.*

* This was not the garden where Captain Hunter took post on the night of the 6th of February, which lay to the westward of

CHAP. XIV. It was filled with magnificent trees, now destined to fall beneath the axes of the English pioneers, and to be employed in operations directed against the last retreat of the man to whom their spreading branches had formerly afforded shade, and their
A. D. 1792. fruits refreshment. Throughout the 8th of February, while the English were actively engaged in preparing for the meditated blow against the citadel, Tippoo shewed no symptom of energy, beyond wasting a large quantity of ammunition in a fruitless cannonade directed to the island, to the redoubts, to every scattered English party, and sometimes to their head-quarters: but the distance on all sides was considerable; and the pleasure of maintaining a continuous noise, and darkening the atmosphere by masses of smoke, was the only advantage derived from the exercise. In the evening he resolved to renew his attempt at negotiation. No intercourse of a pacific character had taken place for more than a month, and to the last overture from the enemy Lord Cornwallis had indignantly answered, *that* when the prisoners taken at Coimbatore, and unjustly detained in breach of the capitulation, should be sent back, he would in concert with the allies make arrangements for the commencement of negotiation. Two of these prisoners Tippoo now determined to employ as instruments of a new appeal to the governor-general. Lieutenants Chalmers and Nash were unexpectedly summoned to an audience

the pettah, and was of much smaller dimensions than that mentioned in the text.

of the Sultan, and on their attendance were informed that they were about to be released.* After communicating this welcome intelligence, Tippoo inquired if the former officer were not related to Lord Cornwallis? Receiving an answer in the negative, he then asked if he were not an officer of high rank? Lieutenant Chalmers having disclaimed this supposed ground of influence with the British commander-in-chief, Tippoo next inquired whether the emancipated prisoner, on his return, would have any personal intercourse with the governor-general? and having learned that he expected to be admitted to an interview, the Sultan requested that he would take charge of letters making overtures of peace, and lend his aid towards attaining the object. The charge was accompanied by a present to the officer receiving it of two shawls and five hundred rupees, and a promise that the baggage of both himself and his companion should be sent after them. Lieutenant Chalmers undertook to gratify the Sultan's wishes by the delivery of the letters; but at the same time warned him, that beyond this it might not be in his power to promote his views.

In the communication thus transmitted, Tippoo, with his habitual disregard of truth, asserted that the terms of the capitulation at Coimbatore had been misrepresented—that Kummer-oo-Deen did not en-

* The topasses and part of the sepoys taken at Coimbatore having been confined in the pettah, had previously obtained their liberty through the success of the British army in that quarter.

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gage positively for the liberty of the garrison, but only promised to recommend it. The counterpart of the articles of capitulation, signed and sealed by Kummer-oo-Deen, had been retained by Lieutenant Chalmers; and had he been able to produce this with the letters of which he was the bearer, the veracity of Tippoo would have required no further illustration. But the Sultan was too tender of his reputation to expose it to such hazard; and before the English officer was permitted to depart, he was forcibly dispossessed of the document which would have furnished so unseasonable a commentary on the letters. Lieutenant Chalmers, however, was able to speak to its contents, and to the manner in which it had passed out of his keeping; but notwithstanding this—notwithstanding that the demand for the surrender of the prisoners taken at Coimbatore had been but partially complied with, Lord Cornwallis, with that degree of moderation which verges on weakness, if it do not actually pass the line of separation, yielded to the Sultan's request, and consented to admit his vakeels to confer with those of the allied army.

Coincident with the pacific mission to the English camp of Lieutenants Chalmers and Nash, Tippoo was preparing another of a very different character. His object was the death of the English commander-in-chief; and on an expedition directed to this purpose, a select body of horse moved on the same day on which the two British officers were released, and

crossed the river at Arikery. The movement was observed, but no particular importance was attached to it. The following day was employed by the detached party of the enemy in collecting information. On the third day their advanced guard interposed itself between the camp of Nizam Ali and that of the English, not unobserved, but without exciting suspicion, the intruders being mistaken for a party of Nizam Ali's horse. So similar were they to that body in appearance, that they were allowed, without interruption, to advance to the British park of artillery. Arrived there, they carelessly asked of some natives in attendance on the guns, which was the tent of the burra Saib—the principal commander. Even yet no suspicion was excited, but the question was misapprehended. The inquiry was supposed to apply to the tent of Colonel Duff, the commandant of the artillery, which was, without hesitation, pointed out. The horsemen then suddenly drew their swords and galloped towards the tent which they supposed to be that of Lord Cornwallis, cutting down the few persons whom they met on their way; but before they reached the tent towards which they were furiously riding, their ardour received a check. On the alarm of their approach, a small body of sepoys turned out, whose fire soon changed the course of the horsemen, and sent them towards the hills in flight, at the same headlong speed with which they were previously rushing to the tent of Colonel Duff. Although, from the mistake that had occurred, Lord Cornwallis had been in no danger, this attempt was

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justly thought to call for some additional precautions for securing the safety of his person.*

While the army of Lord Cornwallis was engaged in preparing for the siege of Seringapatam, it was joined by that of General Abercromby. That officer, on the former retreat of the governor-general from before Tippoo's capital, had, in conformity with his orders, withdrawn his army to Malabar. He had himself proceeded to Bombay, where his duties as governor required his presence; but returning to Telicherry after a short absence, with a new battering train, a supply of ammunition and stores, and a body of recruits, the army of Bombay thereupon quitted its cantonments and re-assembled at Cananore. Its subsequent march lying through a mountainous country, the transport of the artillery stores was attended with great difficulty; but it had been surmounted, when, late in January, General Abercromby received orders from Lord Cornwallis to leave his battering train and advance with

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* An attempt against the person of Lord Cornwallis had been made by three horsemen near Bangalore, but it was the mad result of intoxication. The attack mentioned in the text was premeditated with great care, and though it has been said that on this occasion too the horsemen were under the influence of *bang*, the assertion is discredited by Colonel Wilks. That officer speaks of this and the former attack as attempts at assassination. Major Dirom, in speaking of the later attack, uses the same term. But this view of the transaction appears unwarranted. Assassination was with Tippoo an ordinary instrument of effecting his purposes; but an attack by a body of armed men upon the person of the general of a hostile army, made with no ordinary boldness and involving great personal danger, seems not to deserve to be stigmatized as an attempt at assassination.

his field artillery only. The heavy guns and stores were accordingly sent back to the top of a ghaut which the army had just descended, and there placed in batteries erected for the defence of the pass. On the 11th of February General Abercromby crossed the Cauvery about thirty miles above Seringapatam, and after meeting with some annoyance from the enemy's cavalry, who took part of his baggage, joined Lord Cornwallis on the 16th. CHAP. XIV. A. D. 1792.

The vakeels of Tippoo had arrived, in accordance with the permission given by Lord Cornwallis, and the process of negotiation was carried on simultaneously with the most vigorous preparation on one side for the prosecution of the siege—on the other, for the defence of Seringapatam. The fort was of a triangular figure, covered by branches of the river on its two largest sides. The third side, which was towards the island, was covered by strong outworks. Two broad and massy ramparts, the second at a considerable distance within the first, and both having good flank defences, a deep ditch with draw-bridges, and various advantages derived from the skill of Tippoo's European servants in the modern principles of fortification, enhanced the difficulty of approach on this side. Notwithstanding these circumstances, it was, in the first instance, selected as the point for the main attack, and the ground of the choice appears to have been an expectation that, as there were no impediments but those of art to encounter, the superiority of the British troops and artillery would secure success. More careful observation led to

CHAP. XIV. the adoption of a different plan, the change being accelerated by intelligence and suggestions from Tippoo's European servants—who were now quite as ready to exercise their skill and knowledge for his destruction as they had previously been assiduous in using them for his defence—and it was resolved to make the principal attack across the river against the north side of the fort. The curtain there was perceptibly weak, and by extending close to the bank of the river, left no room for outworks. The flank defences were few, and of little value—the ditch excavated from the rock was stated to be inconsiderable, and was moreover dry. The stone glacis built into the river was in two places imperfect. The walls, it was concluded, might be trenched to the foundations, and the probable effect would be the filling up the greater part of the ditch. The main objection was the intervention of the river; but this was not thought sufficient to counterbalance the advantages of the plan.

The works constructed by the English advanced with great rapidity and great secrecy. When their design became fully visible, Tippoo, despairing of success in the endeavour to repel the invaders by the fire of the fort, attempted to distress them by turning the water from a large canal by which the English camp was principally supplied. The attempt was discovered in time to prevent its completion, and the small damage which had been done to the bank of the canal was speedily repaired. On the

A.D. 1792. 22nd of February, General Abercromby advanced

his posts for the purpose of aiding in the operations of the siege. On the same day Tippoo made a new effort to drive the English posts to a greater distance from his capital, but was defeated. Through two succeeding days the besiegers steadily proceeded with their preparations; in four days more it was expected that two breaching batteries, one of twenty, the other of twelve guns, would be ready to open, together with an enfilading battery of at least ten pieces. These were to be assisted by a cross fire from the island, but more especially from the redoubt formerly called the Sultan's, but which had most properly received from the English the name of Sibald's redoubt, in honour of the brave officer who fell while commanding the gallant band who so nobly defended it. Colonel Duff had his park fully provided and arranged. Even furnaces had been prepared for heating shot, and from the combustible nature of the materials of which many of the buildings within the fort were composed, it was anticipated that the fire of the batteries would not long be opened before the place against which it was directed would be wrapt in flames. To add to the embarrassments of the enemy, Purseram Bhow, with the Mahratta army and Captain Little's brigade of English sepoys, was now approaching, as was Major Cuppage, with a force from Coimbatore. While the allied armies were thus concentrating their force around Tippoo's capital, they were exempted from the difficulty which had formerly driven Lord Cornwallis from before Seringapatam when victory seemed to be within his reach;

CHAP. XIV. the supply of provisions was abundant. Such was the condition of the armies of the allies—numerous, well appointed and well supplied, the thunder of their cannon was about to be poured upon a fort, the last hope of the enemy, within which sate the prince whose aggressions had brought to his gates as a foe the head of the English government of India, bound by the most imperative instructions to preserve peace if practicable, and disposed by his own wishes to maintain the same course. On the head of the man who had so wantonly protracted the calamities of war was the storm now approaching about to burst. The English army almost looked upon themselves as in possession of Seringapatam,

A. D. 1792. when, on the 24th of February, orders were sent to the trenches that the working should be discontinued, and all hostile demonstrations cease. The orders were received with that feeling which accompanies the hearing of any sudden and inexplicable communication. It was at first supposed that there must have been some mistake—but it was soon ascertained that this belief had no foundation. The orders became intelligible when it was known that, after several days' conference between the agents of the respective governments, those of the allies had delivered their ultimatum—that the conditions therein laid down had been assented to by the Sultan, and the preliminaries signed. The discussion had been brought to a conclusion on the 22nd, and the demands of the allies forthwith submitted to Tippoo. They were embodied in five articles to the following

effect:—First, that one-half of the dominions of which Tippoo was in possession before the war should be ceded to the allies from the countries adjacent to theirs; secondly, that Tippoo should pay three crores and thirty lacs of rupees, one-half immediately, and the remainder by three instalments, at intervals not exceeding four months each. Six crores had been originally demanded; but the Sultan's vakeels denied the ability of their master to pay more than the sum finally agreed upon, and offered to confirm their denial by the solemnity of an oath. After the tender of such a proof of their veracity, who could disbelieve them? Lord Cornwallis, it would seem, did not. The third article stipulated that all prisoners taken by the four powers—the English, the Nizam, the Mahrattas, and Tippoo—from the time of Hyder Ali, should be restored; the fourth, that two of Tippoo's sons should be given as hostages for the due performance of the treaty; and the fifth provided that when the hostages should arrive in the camp with the articles of the treaty, under the seal of the Sultan, a counterpart should be sent from the three powers, hostilities should entirely cease, and the terms of a treaty of alliance and perpetual friendship should be agreed upon.

On reading these articles, Tippoo assembled his principal officers in the great mosque, and having laid before them the Koran, adjured them by its contents to answer sincerely the question he was about to propose to them. Having read the arti-

CHAP. XIV. cles, he said, "You have heard the conditions of peace—you have now to hear and answer my question. Shall it be peace or war?" The assemblage thus appealed to were loud and unanimous in professions of devotion to their sovereign, and of their readiness to lay down their lives in defence of his person and capital; but they were equally unanimous in declaring—softening, however, the repulsive truth so as to render it not quite unfit to reach the ears of an oriental despot, but still without disguising it—that the troops were altogether dispirited, and that no confidence could be placed in them. The reed to which the fast sinking hopes of Tippoo clung was now broken. The men who never before had ventured to intrude upon the royal ear any unwelcome sound, now dared to speak that which was true in preference to that which was agreeable. The extremity of danger had made them sincere, and for once their master had received counsel that was above suspicion. He felt that it could not be disregarded. The articles were signed and dispatched to Lord Cornwallis, but indulgence was solicited with regard to that which stipulated for the transmission of the preliminaries by the youths who were to be detained as hostages. They were not thus transmitted; a short delay was asked to allow of due preparation for the departure of the princes, and the governor-general, with a very laudable feeling, granted it.

The liberality of Lord Cornwallis was not met with any indication of a similar nature on the part

of the enemy. Even the stipulation for the immediate cessation of hostilities, to which the Sultan's seal had been affixed, was disregarded. Immediately on receiving the preliminaries, Lord Cornwallis had issued those orders for the cessation of all warlike operations, which excited in his army so much surprise, not unaccompanied by something of despondency and something of indignation. It was not without difficulty that the men could be restrained from proceeding with the works which they had anticipated were to put them in possession of Seringapatam, and enable them to effect the triumphant deliverance of those victims of Tippoo's tyranny and perfidy who still remained within his power. But discipline prevailed—the wishes of the army were yielded to the demands of duty, and all offensive operations ceased. Not such was the conduct of Tippoo and his garrison. For several hours the fire of cannon from the fort, and of musketry from the advanced parties of the enemy, was kept up more vigorously than before; a British officer and several men were wounded in consequence of this audacious contempt of an engagement so recently concluded. Most just would the retribution have been, had the governor-general revoked his former orders, recommenced the construction of his abandoned works, and prosecuted the siege to the point when the possession of Tippoo's capital should have been decided by the comparative valour or the comparative numbers of those who assailed and those who defended it. Lord Cornwallis, however, contented

CHAP. XIV. himself with a series of messages, the earlier of which produced no effect. It may be doubted whether the latter were more efficacious than those which preceded them, or whether the discontinuance of the firing is not attributable to the influence of that caprice to which Tippoo was accustomed to surrender himself; but from some cause the firing came to an end, and the irritation which it occasioned in the minds of the British troops, who found themselves placed on unequal terms with the enemy, subsided. On this instance of the Sultan's folly and perfidy the observations of Major Dirom deserve notice, from their justness and force. "This extraordinary conduct in the enemy," says he, "was supposed in camp to arise from a mistake in the vakeels not having acquainted their master that hostilities must cease: but the Sultan could not be ignorant of the articles he had signed and sealed the preceding night; nor was this any great testimony of the sincerity of his wishes to terminate the war. Indeed, his conduct could bear no other construction than an insolent and revengeful bravado, to fire upon us when he could with impunity, and to impose upon the ignorant part of his own subjects and our allies, and leave their minds impressed with an idea that his superior fire (for we had opened no guns upon the fort) and his resolute defence had been the means of his obtaining peace."*

A.D. 1792. On the 26th of February, the fourth article of the preliminaries was carried into effect by the departure

* Major Dirom's Narrative, page 222.

of the hostage princes from Seringapatam to the British camp. The elder of the princes was about ten years of age; his brother two years younger. Each was mounted on an elephant richly caparisoned, and their dresses glittered with numerous and valuable jewels. They were attended by the Mysorean vakeels who had conducted the negotiation; several messengers mounted on camels, and seven standard-bearers, carrying small green flags suspended from rockets, preceded the princes; a hundred pikemen, with spears inlaid with silver, immediately followed them; and a guard of two hundred sepoys with a party of horse brought up the rear. Great crowds were collected to witness the scene, whether actuated by the desire of beholding an imposing spectacle, or by some higher motive. The Sultan himself was on the rampart above the gateway through which his sons passed. They departed under a salute from the fort; and as they approached the British camp, twenty-one discharges from its park of artillery greeted their coming, while the part of the British line which they passed was turned out to receive them. On arriving at the tents prepared for their reception, they were met by the governor-general's agent Sir John Kenaway, and the vakeels of the Nizam and the Mahratta state. The governor-general had proposed to meet them here; but at the express desire of Tippoo this mark of attention was omitted, and it was arranged that they should proceed to the British head-quarters. The proces-

CHAP. XIV. sion accordingly advanced, with the addition which it had received from the accession of the diplomatic agents of the allies and their attendants, and was met by Lord Cornwallis, accompanied by his staff and some of the chief officers of the army, at the door of his lordship's principal tent. On the princes alighting, the governor-general embraced them; and then extending to each one of his hands, led them into the tent and seated them by his side. The duty of Tippoo's head vakeel, who had been placed in charge of the boys, was now at an end; and he signalized its conclusion by a graceful appeal to the feelings of Lord Cornwallis. "These children," said he, "were this morning the sons of the Sultan, my master; their situation is now changed, and they must look up to your lordship as their father." The governor-general made an appropriate reply, assuring the vakeel, and the princes themselves, that all possible care would be taken for the protection of their persons and the promotion of their happiness. The promise was religiously fulfilled; and the transfer of the paternal character announced by the vakeel "ceased," says Colonel Wilks, "to be an Oriental image, if determined by the test of paternal attentions." A strong interest for the captive youths was indeed prevalent throughout the British army; a feeling which, with regard to the younger, was increased by the affecting circumstance of his mother having recently died from fright, occasioned by the attack on Tippoo's lines. So fully was the Sultan

contented with the reception of his sons, that he ordered a royal salute to be fired in testimony of his satisfaction.

In partial payment of the sum stipulated by the preliminaries, a crore of rupees was forwarded by Tippoo to the British camp. The vakeels continued to meet for the arrangement of the definitive treaty; but their progress was embarrassed by the usual arts of Indian negotiators. The cessions to be made by Tippoo were to be determined with reference to revenue; but the Sultan's vakeels pretended that the revenue accounts of many districts were lost, and proposed to supply their place by statements which, as might be expected, invariably over-rated the resources of the provinces to be surrendered, and under-rated those which were to be retained by their master. The vakeels of the Nizam and the Mahrattas produced counter-statements, which in all probability were not less unfairly exaggerated or diminished than those of Tippoo. This was not the only source of difference. The value of the Sultan's coins was fixed by public regulation; and it was not unreasonable to expect that, in the payments to be made by that prince to the confederates, this valuation should be followed. Tippoo's vakeels, however, affirmed that it was applicable only to the receipt of money into the treasury; and that when issued from thence, it was always at a rate much more favourable to the sovereign. This was probably true; but the allies were not readily to be persuaded to receive payment at the rate at which

CHAP. XIV. the Sultan had been accustomed to liquidate the debts due from him to his subjects. A middle course was at length adopted: the vakeels of the allies agreed to divide the difference in their respective modes of estimating the value of the coins, and thus to allow to the Sultan one-half the advantage which he obtained in dealing with those who could not resist him. A similar compromise was effected with regard to the estimated value of the different provinces constituting his dominions, and the labours of the negotiators seemed in a fair way of coming to a speedy conclusion.

But a new difficulty arose. Among the cessions demanded on behalf of the allies was Coorg, a mountainous country of considerable extent, but yielding only a very moderate tribute. The people of Coorg were Hindoos, and in their habits not very dissimilar from the Nairs of Malabar. They were warlike, and averse to foreign dominion. They had, however, been subdued by Hyder Ali; and though frequent insurrections had taken place, they were speedily suppressed, and the country continued to be an appendage to the throne of Mysore. The Rajah, when a youth, had been imprisoned by Tippoo; but effecting his escape, he succeeded in collecting round him a band of followers, by whose assistance he was enabled to assert his authority, and gradually to dispossess the foreign population which, in conformity with a frequent practice of the house of Hyder Ali, had been settled in the country. Not satisfied with this measure of success, he

retaliated on his enemy by levying contributions on the territory adjoining his own frontier, and by these predatory excursions he retrieved the resources of a country exhausted by the oppression of foreign conquerors. On the commencement of hostilities between the English and Tippoo, he gave passage to the army of General Abercromby through his dominions, and greatly facilitated their operations by the supply of provisions, the communication of intelligence, and the extension of every species of aid which he could command.* He had therefore

* In supplying the necessities of his protectors, the Rajah never declined either trouble or danger. An application was made to him for a supply of gun-bullocks. He answered, that the bullocks of Coorg were quite unfit for the purpose. This answer was not the effect of coldness to the cause of his friends, nor of any desire to evade the request made to him. It was in strict accordance with fact; and the Rajah immediately undertook a most hazardous expedition into Mysore to obtain for the English a supply of beasts adapted to their wants from the stock of their common enemy, the Sultan. He succeeded; and subsequently made other irruptions with the same object, and with similar success. His character was altogether extraordinary, and was marked by a degree of romantic generosity of rare occurrence anywhere, and most rare among the generally corrupt, effeminate, and perfidious race of Eastern princes. At the time of General Abercromby's passage through Coorg in 1791, the Mysoreans had been dispossessed of every fort which they had occupied, except Mercara, which was closely invested by the Coorgs, and expected to surrender within a very short period. Intelligence, however, was received of the approach of a convoy of provisions, escorted by a considerable body of troops; but this force was attacked and defeated by the Rajah, and being ultimately surrounded, was left without the possibility of escape. The immediate surrender of Mercara was consequently anticipated by the English general, who was greatly surprised to learn,

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a strong claim to the protection of the British government, which could only effectively be exerted by the transfer of his tributary dependence from Tippoo to the power whose interests the Coorg Rajah had so zealously promoted. Were he given up to the discretion of the Sultan of Mysore, no question could exist as to the use which would be made of the liberty. The honour of the British government seemed, therefore, involved in the assertion of the

from the intelligence which next reached him, that the convoy had been allowed to enter Mercara, and the escort to return in safety. The obvious conclusion was, that such an arrangement could only be the result of treachery, and that the Rajah was leagued with Tippoo against those with whom he had hitherto been acting. But his conduct merited a more favourable interpretation; and such an explanation of it was given as satisfied the English authorities of his sincerity, however they might disapprove of his acts. The commander of the escort had, during the Rajah's imprisonment, shewn him some acts of kindness; and he had established a still higher claim upon his gratitude, by preserving the honour of one of his sisters, and restoring her to the protection of her brother. The indulgence shewn by the prince was in acknowledgment of these favours. Even the killadar of Mercara, in compliment to the officer in charge of the convoy, was permitted for a time to remain free from molestation. With the aid of the English army the place might have been reduced immediately; but the Rajah declined to receive it. Still, Mercara was not to remain in the hands of the enemy. An understanding was established with the killadar, who was enjoined to consume all his provisions as fast as was practicable with a decent regard to appearances. This being accomplished, he was permitted to capitulate on terms; and the romantic Rajah not only gave the officer and his garrison safe conduct to Seringapatam, but presented them with a liberal donation of money. The walls of Mercara were then razed to the ground. Eastern romance scarcely presents any thing more extraordinary than these incidents of Eastern history.

demand for the transfer of Coorg; but on the other hand, as that country was not properly adjacent to the territories of any of the allied powers, the demand was not in strict accordance with the terms of the preliminaries.*

The rage of Tippoo, on learning the demand made on behalf of the English, was unbounded. "To which of the English possessions," he asked, "is Coorg adjacent? Why do they not ask for the key of Seringapatam?" To these passionate inquiries he added a declaration, that his enemies knew that he would sooner have died in the breach than consent to the cession, and that they dared not bring it forward till they had treacherously obtained possession of his children and treasure. It is certain that the possession of Coorg was most important to the English, as enabling them to hold Tippoo in check. For this reason, as well as in regard to the just claims of the Rajah upon their protection, it is deeply to be lamented that the preliminaries were not so framed as to allow of the demand for its surrender without giving the Sultan even a colourable pretence for complaining of bad faith. The importance of Coorg, and the services of the Rajah, could scarcely have been overlooked when the preliminaries were drawn. If such were the fact, the case was one of most

* The article relating to the cession of territory ran thus:—"One-half of the dominions of which Tippoo Sultan was in possession before the war to be ceded to the allies, *from the countries adjacent, according to their situation.*"

CHAP. XIV. reprehensible negligence. But the more probable opinion seems to be, that from the weak anxiety of the governor-general for peace, it was judged expedient to frame the preliminaries in such a manner as to keep out of sight any point likely to be peculiarly startling or disagreeable to the Sultan's feelings. The result was, that the English were ultimately compelled either to assert a claim in which their right was, to say the least, suspicious, or to abandon a meritorious supporter to the mercy of the tyrant of Mysore.

In this choice of evils, the governor-general made his election in favour of that which perhaps was, on the whole, the less. He refused to recede from the demand, ordered some guns which had been sent away to be brought back to the island and redoubts, and preparations recommenced for prosecuting the siege. Tippoo, with equal vigour, began to prepare for defence. Indeed he had scarcely, if at all, discontinued the work. For some time after the cessation of all active labours on the part of the English, the stir of preparation was observable within the fort. This, being contrary to the rules of an armistice and the custom of war, no less than to the conduct of the besiegers, was made the subject of remonstrance. Tippoo, in a tone of insolence thinly disguised under an appearance of extreme humility, answered, that Lord Cornwallis must have been misinformed; but for his lordship's satisfaction, if he desired, one of the bastions should be thrown down, that he *might* see

into the fort. The unexpected demand of the Coorg country furnished the Sultan with a sufficient excuse for pursuing his operations without disguise, and he lost no time in availing himself of the opportunity. CHAP. XIV.

The ability of the English to carry on the siege was greatly impaired by the delay which had taken place. The greater part of the materials collected for the purpose had become unfit for use, and fresh supplies could be obtained only from a considerable distance and with considerable labour. The trenches had suffered much injury, and required repair—and worse than all, the army, especially the European part of it, by confinement to a fixed spot in an unhealthy situation during the most unhealthy season, had become greatly enfeebled by the encroachments of disease. So rapidly was sickness extending, that there was some reason to fear that by the time the necessary preparations for assault were completed, the requisite number of men for making the attempt, with a fair probability of success, would not remain effective. In other quarters there was ground for apprehension. Differences existed between the Nizam and the Mahratta allies of the British, and but little reliance could be placed on the fidelity of either, while Scindia was in motion with views believed to be not friendly to British interests. Thus circumstanced, every hour of delay diminished the strength of the British army and increased its danger, while it enabled

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Tippoo to add something to the difficulties with which it had to contend. To gain time by protracted negotiation was obviously the interest of the enemy, while to the English it was important to bring the point in dispute at once to a close. With a view to expediting such a result, on the return of the vakeels with the report of Tippoo's refusal to assent to the surrender of Coorg, the two hostage princes were apprized that they must prepare to move the next morning towards Coromandel, and their Mysorean guards were disarmed and placed under restraint. The youths, who were much affected by the intimation, were, in accordance with it, conducted to the rear of the army, but were there permitted to halt and await the result of a further attempt on the part of Tippoo's vakeels to induce their master, as they said, "to hear reason." These officers were desired to intimate that unless the signature of the Sultan were affixed without delay to a definitive treaty, based on the arrangements concluded between them and the vakeels of the allies, hostilities would be immediately resumed. Purseram Bhow had now arrived, and, according to Mahratta custom, felt little disposition to respect any suspension of arms which interfered with the acquisition of plunder. His horsemen set vigorously to work, and carried off a number of camels and cattle belonging to the enemy. Against this breach of the armistice Tippoo remonstrated, but it perhaps had some effect in influencing his final deter-

mination. After various excuses, the vakeels, on the 18th of March, once more appeared with the treaty duly ratified in triplicate, and on the following day it was formally presented to Lord Cornwallis by the captive sons of the Sultan.

The effect of this treaty was to bring the frontier of the Mahrattas to the river Toombuddra, which was their boundary about thirteen years before; to restore to Nizam Ali his territories north of that river, and the possession of Kurpa on its south; while the English obtained Malabar, Coorg, Dindigul, and Bâramahal, all of them cessions of considerable importance in adding to the strength and compactness of the Company's territories.

Still there is reason to lament that Tippoo Sultan should have been granted terms so favourable. They were not such as might have been expected from the language held by Lord Cornwallis previously to the negotiation. He had declared that to allow Tippoo to retain even a considerable portion of his power and possessions at the conclusion of the war, would only, instead of real peace, give us an armed truce, and that he would immediately reject any proposal of that nature; yet Lord Cornwallis left Tippoo in possession of a very considerable portion of his former power and possessions. The governor-general, however, qualified the declaration above referred to by adding, that if such concessions were offered as would put it out of the enemy's power to disturb the peace of India in future, he would suffer no prospects, however brilliant, to post-

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pone the conclusion of a general peace.* Lord Cornwallis, therefore, did not meditate the total annihilation of Tippoo's power, but only such reduction of it as would deprive him of the ability to do mischief. Did he effect this? Did he insist on such terms as put it out of Tippoo's power to disturb the peace of India? In the progress of this narrative it will be seen that he did not. Perhaps no more injudicious course could have been taken than that pursued by Lord Cornwallis.

The humiliation and loss to which the Sultan was subjected would naturally influence his previous feelings of enmity, and he was left with the means of gratifying those feelings. Whether Lord Cornwallis was swayed by deference to the prevailing prejudices in England, in opposition to the dictates of his own judgment, or whether he participated in those prejudices, cannot be distinctly known. But whatever the motive, his choice was unfortunate. In defending it, he asserted that it would be more beneficial to the public interest than the capture of Seringapatam, and that it would render the final settlement with the allies more easy. The latter position it is difficult to understand. The former seems to confirm a report to which Sir Thomas Munro adverts, that Lord Cornwallis actually felt disinclined to effect the capture of Seringapatam, and had frequently exclaimed, "What shall I do with this place?" Sir Thomas Munro's comment

* These views were expressed by Lord Cornwallis in his correspondence with the government of Madras.

on this is replete with good sense: "I would have said, 'Keep it, as the best barrier you can have to your own countries.'"* The advice would have been sound, but it would then have been rejected, because not in accordance with the fashionable doctrine of moderation; a doctrine not only sanctioned by the suffrage of public opinion, but solemnly incorporated into the provisions of the law. The necessity which Lord Cornwallis had felt for deviating to a certain extent from the course of policy laid down for him, may well be supposed to have in some degree alarmed the champions of the popular creed. But the shock was transient, and it was, with an extent of faith worthy of a better object, still believed that the British government in India could maintain itself exactly in the position in which it then existed, without either gaining or losing an inch of territory or an atom of power. "The Indian government in England," says Sir John Malcolm, "had seen (perhaps with regret) that events which they had no power of controlling had forced Lord Cornwallis to an actual departure from that purposed system of forbearance and neutrality which they had believed practicable, and which they had so earnestly recommended to his attention; and that,

* Life, vol. i. page 131. Sir Thomas Munro adds some remarks, not less true than lively. "Every thing now is done by moderation and conciliation. At this rate, we shall be all Quakers in twenty years more. I am still of the old doctrine, that the best method of making all princes keep the peace, not excepting even Tippoo, is to make it dangerous for them to disturb your quiet."

CHAP. XIV. in opposition to those views which they had taken of their interests, their territories had been greatly increased and their political relations much extended during his administration. The admission of that necessity which forced Lord Cornwallis into a course of measures so contrary to their wishes and policy, does not appear to have been followed by a conclusion that the same causes might again produce the same effect; and a general impression would appear at this period to have been received in England, that the exertions of that nobleman had placed the affairs of the Company on the true footing of security and strength which had been so long desired, and that nothing was requisite but mild, moderate, and conciliatory councils in the local authorities, to secure the lasting tranquillity and prosperity of the British possessions in India."*

In judging of the proceedings of Lord Cornwallis, due allowance should undoubtedly be made for the influence of the delusive state of feeling with regard to Indian affairs which was all but universal in England, and for the desire which the governor-general may be supposed to have entertained to offer to that feeling as little offence as possible. But one of the preliminary articles was so shamelessly and scandalously evaded, that no consideration of expediency ought to have been permitted to restrain the British government from expressing its indignation, and, if necessary, compelling by force the due execu-

* Sketch of the Political History of India, ed. 1811, pages 133, 134.

tion of the provision thus atrociously violated. It was provided that all prisoners from the time of Hyder Ali should be set at liberty. Tippoo had carried off a great number of prisoners from Coromandel, whom he had detained in violation of the treaty of 1784, and who, notwithstanding the conclusion of the subsequent treaty, were unable to regain their liberty except by stealth. These persons fled in considerable numbers, and were received by the English, but in a manner which seemed as though they were ashamed of performing this duty;* and no means were adopted to ascertain how many of these unhappy persons still remained within the tyrant's power. Some inquiry was made respecting the officers and soldiers taken during the war, but with regard even to them the English authorities appear to have been satisfied with whatever explanation it pleased the vakeels of Tippoo to give, although there was strong ground for suspecting that in several instances the missing parties had fallen victims to the

* "The shameless infraction of the treaty of 1784, with regard to the inhabitants of Coromandel, had been daily and constantly evinced during the whole period subsequent to the 6th of February. In consequence of confidential communication from these unhappy captives, Colonel Stuart had latterly appointed the southern redoubt for their resort by night; and it was an interesting spectacle at the dawn of every morning to see its whole circumference surrounded with men, women, and children, with their cattle and effects, who were passed over to the island before broad daylight, and forwarded by Lord Cornwallis's orders by the first escort, and with such aid as they required; and, notwithstanding the mortality which had thinned their numbers, many thousands were in this manner restored to their native homes."—Wilks's Historical Sketches, vol. iii. pp. 249, 250.

CHAP. XIV. Sultan's vengeance. Some of the followers of the English camp who had been made prisoners returned after a time, each mutilated of a hand. These unfortunate men were shewn to the vakeels, who said, that they had been caught plundering, and that the barbarous punishment inflicted on them was without the Sultan's knowledge. The ignorance of the Sultan was indeed always pleaded to exonerate him from responsibility for the cruelties exercised under his authority. He, it was said, did not sanction them, and could not inquire into all the details of his government.* With such ready apologies as these the governor-general was content.

If, however, Lord Cornwallis failed in some points in which the national honour was materially concerned, he manifested great personal disinterestedness, by relinquishing for the benefit of the army his share of booty. The example was followed by General Medows; who, though he had proved himself unfit for the exercise of an independent command of importance, appears to have merited the character of a brave soldier and a generous man.†

* Major Dirom's Narrative, pages 235, 236.

† That he was free from professional jealousy, and little influenced by either ambition or avarice, is proved by the terms in which he spoke of Lord Cornwallis, whose presence superseded him in the chief command, and by the fact of his having declined to succeed that nobleman on his retiring from the government of Bengal. The following passage from his letter to the Court of Directors, on receiving this honourable offer, may attest his frankness, gallantry, candour, and moderation. "Though the elements, more faithful allies to Tippoo than either the Nizam's troops or the Mahrattas to us, have obliged us to defer the siege

As soon as the arrangements between the belligerents could be regarded as finally concluded, Lord Cornwallis became anxious to remove his army with all practicable speed from the pestilential spot which was rapidly consuming its strength. The governor-general arrived at Madras late in May, and in Bengal in July following. After his departure from Seringapatam, Tippoo assembled the chiefs of his army and the heads of departments, and informed them, that the contribution of three crores and thirty lacs, by which he had purchased the absence of the invaders, must be provided for at the joint cost of himself, the army, and the people at large.* His

of Seringapatam, I still flatter myself it is only postponed, and not put off farther than from June to January; when, if he does not make a peace, which I take to be so much the interest of all parties, the loss of his capital, I hope and expect, will be soon followed by the loss of his kingdom. Lord Cornwallis, who sees every thing, who does every thing, and who is every thing, will, I hope, have the peace in such forwardness by January, as to enable me to go home with propriety, while he stays another year to complete the great and arduous undertaking he so happily began, has so nobly continued, and I have no doubt will so perfectly conclude, to his own honour and your satisfaction. But should things take another turn, and there should not be peace, though I beg leave to decline going to Bengal after January 1792, I will never quit this country till I have commanded the storming-party at Seringapatam, or until the war is over. When, after the handsome and independent fortune I shall have made in your service (I should guess about forty thousand pounds, but I will tell you the uttermost farthing the moment I know it), entirely by proper saving from your liberal appointments, if you shall think 'the labourer worthy of his hire,' I shall be most amply compensated."

* Colonel Wilks's Sketches, vol. iii. page 255.

CHAP. XIV. own share was, in the exercise of his royal grace and benignity, fixed at one crore and ten lacs—one-third of the entire amount. Sixty lacs were to be furnished by the army, as a nuzerana or *gift*—a donation bestowed as freely and with the same degree of good-will as was formerly in England the "benevolence," so called, in aid of the sovereign's necessities. The remaining one crore and sixty lacs were to be provided by the civil officers and the inhabitants generally. The mode of distributing this last share of the burden was left to the heads of the civil departments, who prudently endeavoured to relieve themselves as far as possible from its pressure. The accounts, however, were made up with all the strictness which was due to public decorum, and to the characters of the responsible parties who exercised control over them. Each civil officer was debited with the sum which in fairness he might be called upon to pay, and a corresponding entry of the discharge of the claim was made with due precision. Had the Sultan condescended to examine those records, he must have been delighted, not only by the accuracy with which they were made up, but by the severe exactness maintained by those who prepared them, in regard to their own contributions. But the books were false witnesses, and those by whom they were compiled paid nothing. Their shares were paid by an extra levy upon the inhabitants of each district beyond the amount of the nominal assessment. There was one inconvenience attending this ingenious operation. The great men,

with whom it originated, could not conceal the process from their official inferiors; the latter were not to be persuaded that those above them possessed any exclusive claim to the exercise of fraud and extortion—and it followed that, to secure impunity to themselves, the higher officers were obliged to connive at conduct similar to their own in every person engaged in the collection. It is not difficult to conceive what was the situation of a country thus plundered at the discretion of every revenue officer, from the chief who stood in the royal presence, to the lowest runner who conveyed to the miserable inhabitants the unwelcome order to deliver their cherished hoards. Under such a system, it is obviously impossible to ascertain how much was extorted from the suffering people; but it was generally believed that the sum far exceeded the whole amount which, according to the allotment made by the Sultan, they were called upon to pay. Yet, at the end of several years, a balance of sixty lacs still stood on the books of the treasury against the country. Torture in its most horrible forms was resorted to; but from utter destitution even torture could extort nothing; and that obstinate determination, which in the East so often accompanies and fortifies the love of money, not unfrequently defied the infliction. Such are the ordinary incidents of native governments; and it must be remembered, that of such governments, that of Tippoo was by no means the worst. With regard to the fulfilment of the pecuniary engagements of that prince with the allies, it will be

CHAP. XIV. sufficient, without entering into details, to state, that at the end of about two years its progress permitted the restoration of the two hostage princes to their father. They were accompanied by Captain Doveton; and Tippoo, in the exercise of that hatred to the English which long indulgence had rendered almost uncontrollable, hesitated whether he should admit the British officer to his presence. The question was submitted for the opinion of his councillors. They represented that the Sultan's refusal might excite suspicion, and that the Englishman might be amused with professions of friendship, while "whatever was in the heart might remain there." This sage and honest advice the Sultan followed. Captain Doveton was received with great courtesy, and personally surrendered his charge to the Sultan. Tippoo exhibited no emotion on recovering from captivity two persons who might be supposed so dear to him. His reception of them was far less warm and affectionate than that which they had met from Lord Cornwallis on being placed under his care.

The war with Tippoo was the great event of Lord Cornwallis's administration; and nothing of a similar nature occurred to deserve notice, except the capture of the French settlements in the year following that which had terminated the disputes with Mysore. The French revolution had lighted up the flames of war throughout Europe, and England had embarked in the struggle to chain the demon, whose avowed object was the destruction of all existing thrones,

institutions, and forms of government. The attention of the British governments in India was thus directed to the reduction of the possessions of France in that country, and they fell almost without an effort to maintain them. Lord Cornwallis hastened from Bengal to undertake the command of an expedition against Pondicherry; but no such difficulties or labours as were encountered by Sir Eyre Coote fell to the lot of the English when again the capital of the French possessions in India was summoned to surrender. No protracted siege—no formidable array of lines and batteries were required. Before the arrival of the governor-general the place had yielded to a British force under Colonel Braithwaite. This event took place in August, A. D. 1793. 1793. The reduction of the minor French settlements was effected with equal ease and celerity: and again, as had happened thirty-two years before not a staff throughout the wide expanse of India was surmounted by the French flag; nor did a French soldier remain in the country, except as the servant of some native prince or the prisoner of the British government.

It now remains only to advert to the changes effected by Lord Cornwallis in the internal administration of the territories subject to the presidency of Bengal. It will be recollected that the dewanny or administration of the revenue and financial departments of the state had been bestowed on the East-India Company by the Mogul, and that the power had been formally assumed, although the condition

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on which it was granted was not implicitly observed. From the weakness of the native governments, the Nizamut, or remaining powers of the state, passed at first covertly, and afterwards ostensibly, into the hands of the English, who thus became the sole rulers of a very extensive and eminently ill-governed territory. In all native states abuse is the rule, not the exception; and Bengal, under its later nabobs, might be taken as a type of the worst ordered. During the period of transition, when the old authority was rapidly falling into decay, and gathering round it the ordinary concomitants of weakness, contempt, and opposition, while that which was supplanting it had as yet neither the physical power nor the moral respect which are the growth of time—when no one precisely knew with whom any particular portion of authority resided, nor in what manner the rights and duties of government were apportioned between the tottering, sinking musnud of an indolent, effeminate, powerless prince, and the council chamber of the stranger merchants whom the course of events had so wonderfully associated with the destinies of Hindostan—when all was unsettled, indefinable, and precarious, the native policy, which prescribes that each man should secure to himself as large a portion as he can of the objects of human desire, without regard to the means employed or the personal claims of others, received an extraordinary measure of acceleration and strength. The state of the country with regard to the two great branches of administration, revenue and law, was briefly but comprehensively described

in two short passages of a letter addressed, during an early period of Hastings's administration, by the president and council of Bengal to the Court of Directors. With regard to revenue, it was observed that "the Nazims exacted what they could from the zemindars and great farmers of the revenue, whom they left at liberty to plunder all below, reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in their turn when they were supposed to have enriched themselves with the spoils of the country." On the morality of this it is unnecessary to say a word; the misery engendered by it stands not in need of illustration; but the infatuation with which avarice sought to gratify its insatiate appetite by plundering all within its range, though sure that nothing could be retained—that equal avarice, armed with greater power, would compel a full surrender of the fruits of rapine, might afford opportunity for instructive remark were there place for it. All grades of revenue officers engaged in the work of plunder with an avidity which seemed to imply a conviction that they were working for their own benefit; yet none but the highest were able to keep what they gained. Such is the power of a passion which appears to defy not more the restraints of justice than the dictates of common sense—such is a picture of society in an Indian state, where the exercise of extortion is universal, but the enjoyment of its profits confined to a select and powerful few—where the plunderer of to-day is the victim of to-morrow—where the minor oppres-

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sor plies his craft but to enrich his more dignified brethren, and endures a life of anxiety and guilt without recompense or alleviation.

With respect to the administration of *justice*, the situation of Bengal at the period alluded to was not less wretched than with regard to the collection of the revenue. The government reported that "the regular course was everywhere suspended; but every man exercised it who had the power of compelling others to submit to his decisions." What it was that, in such a state of society, every man who had power dispensed to his neighbours, may readily be imagined. It will not be suspected that it was either justice or law. The administrator in this case, like the revenue officer, had no object but to promote his own interest. "Decisions," like other commodities, were marketable, and, in conformity with the custom of trade, were sold to the best bidder. Where any exception occurred, the volunteer administrator of what was called justice was actuated by personal motives of favour or revenge. These enormous abuses were tolerated too long; but at length a movement was made for their suppression, and, under the authority of instructions from home, Hastings exerted himself vigorously to introduce improvement. A board of revenue was established at the capital; European collectors, with native assistants, were appointed in the provinces;*

* European officers, called supervisors, had, for several years, been stationed in the provinces; but their principal employment had been to collect information, of which the government was greatly in need.

and certain members of the council were deputed to make circuits for the purpose of carrying the new arrangements into execution. In the judicial department, two principal courts, called the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut and the Sudder Nizamut Adawlut, were created, and civil and criminal courts of inferior jurisdiction were established throughout the provinces. Various changes took place subsequently, some of them at a very early period; but these it would be impossible even to mention without extending the notice of these transactions to an inconvenient length. One of the most important measures of Hastings's government was the effecting a revenue settlement for five years. Some excellent rules were at the same time propounded—it would be too much to say that they were enforced. Nuzzars, or free gifts, as they were called, were prohibited, and revenue officers were forbidden to hold farms. At the expiration of the five years the practice of annual settlement was again resorted to, and continued till the time of Lord Cornwallis.

That nobleman, soon after undertaking the office of governor-general, was furnished with copious instructions from the Court of Directors on the internal management of the country committed to his care. These instructions were marked by a decided leaning towards the class of functionaries called zemindars, the precise nature of whose connection with the land and the people has afforded subject for much dispute. The court censured the employment of farmers and persons having no permanent

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interest in the land in place of the zemindars; adverted to great defalcations which had taken place; and expressed their opinion that the most practicable method of avoiding such occurrences in future would be, to introduce a permanent settlement of the revenue on reasonable principles, such settlements to be made, in all practicable instances, with the zemindar; and in cases where he might be incapable of the trust, with a relation or agent of the zemindar, in preference to a farmer. But though it was proposed that the assessment should be ultimately fixed in perpetuity, it was determined that at first the settlement should be made for a term of years only; and in order that the views of the court might be carried into effect with precision, it was recommended that inquiry should be made into the rights and privileges of the zemindars and other landholders under the institutions of the Mogul or Hindoo governments, and the services they were bound to perform. The crowning measure of endowing any plan of settlement with perpetuity was reserved to the court. These instructions were issued in consequence of a clause in an act of parliament passed a few years before,* by which the Court of Directors were required to give orders for redressing the wrongs of "rajahs, zemindars, polygars, talookdars, and other native landholders." It is not unworthy of remark that the act only prescribes the establishment of permanent rules, for the regulation of tributes, rents, and services; but by the mode in which

* 24 Geo. 3, cap. 25.

the requisition was carried out in Bengal, the actual amount of tribute or rent assessed upon the land was permanently and unalterably fixed. This was obviously more than the act demanded.*

* The section of the act referred to runs thus:—"And whereas complaints have prevailed that divers rajahs, zemindars, polygars, talookdars, and other native landholders within the British territories in India, have been unjustly deprived of, or compelled to abandon or relinquish, their respective lands, jurisdictions, rights, and privileges, or that the tributes, rents, or services, required to be by them paid or performed, for their respective possessions, to the said United Company, are become grievous and oppressive; and whereas the principles of justice, and the honour of this country, require that such complaints should be forthwith inquired into and fully investigated, and, if founded in truth, effectually redressed: be it therefore enacted, that the Court of Directors of the said United Company shall, and they are hereby accordingly required forthwith to take the said matters into their serious consideration, and to adopt, take, and pursue, such methods for inquiring into the causes, foundation, and truth, of the said complaints, and for obtaining a full and perfect knowledge of the same, and of all circumstances relating thereto, as the said Court of Directors shall think best adapted for that purpose, and thereupon, according to the circumstances of the respective cases of the said rajahs, zemindars, polygars, talookdars, and other native landholders, to give orders and instructions to the several governments and presidencies in India, for effectually redressing, in such manner as shall be consistent with justice and the laws and customs of the country, all injuries and wrongs which the said rajahs, zemindars, polygars, talookdars, and other native landholders, may have sustained unjustly in the manner aforesaid, and for settling and establishing, upon principles of moderation and justice, according to the laws and constitution of India, the permanent rules by which their respective tributes, rents, and services, shall be in future rendered and paid to the said United Company, by the said rajahs, zemindars, polygars, talookdars, and other native landholders." The language of this section of the act indicates a striking want of acquaintance with the state of

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If the home government construed somewhat liberally the intentions of the legislature, their governor-general was not slow in imitating their example in his method of dealing with his instructions. A settlement for ten years was made, preparatory to the irrevocable step which was to deprive the government for ever of any future claim upon the land. In the meantime some inquiry was instituted, in obedience to the commands of the court, into the rights and duties of the zemindars; but a very slight examination was sufficient to satisfy the governor-general. At the threshold of the inquiry lay the question—to whom did the property of the soil belong? On this point different opinions have ever been maintained, and all of them with some degree of plausibility. By some it has been held that in India the land has always been regarded as the property of the sovereign; by others, that in most parts of the country the persons called zemindars are the rightful proprietors; while by a third party it has been contended, that the great majority of cultivators have a permanent interest in the soil, and that the zemindar was only the officer through whom in many cases the claims of government were settled. These theoretical differences of opinion have given rise to others of a practical character,

India. The rules by which the claims of the Company upon the land were to be regulated are directed to be framed not only with regard to moderation and justice, but with respect to the laws and constitution of India. What law of India was referred to? What meaning could be attached to the words "constitution of India?"

as to the parties to be recognized by government in levying its claims upon the land—whether a settlement should be effected with a person called a zemindar, who is responsible for the whole assessment upon a given district, generally of considerable extent; with an association of persons occupying lands within a particular locality, termed a village, the inhabitants of which are connected by peculiar institutions; or with the individual cultivators, known in the language of the country by the name of ryots. These three modes of settlement are respectively described as the zemindary, the village, and the ryotwar systems; and the presumed advantages of each have been maintained with great zeal. But no difference on this point embarrassed the government of Lord Cornwallis. All the influential servants of the presidency appear to have agreed with the governor-general in the preference expressed by the home authorities for the zemindary system of settlement. On the right in the soil, the same unanimity did not prevail; but the governor-general cut short all inquiry by determining, certainly with great precipitancy, to recognize the right as residing exclusively in the zemindars. He not only affirmed his belief that it actually belonged to them, but declared that if it did not, it would be necessary to confer it upon them, or upon some other persons; as nothing, in his judgment, would be more pernicious than to regard the right as appertaining to the state. Lord Cornwallis either entirely overlooked, or chose to appear ignorant of, the possibility

CHAP. XIV. of other rights existing in connection with the land besides those of the government and the zemindar. Mr. Shore,* an able civil servant, recommended caution and further inquiry; but the governor-general seemed to think that his duty was not to inquire, but to act. The sanction of the home authorities for declaring perpetual the decennial settlement which had recently been made was asked
A.D. 1793. and obtained; and on the 22nd of March, 1793, the assessments made under that settlement were authoritatively proclaimed to be fixed for ever.

In India the great source of government revenue is, and ever has been, the land. If the state possess an exclusive property in the soil, it may obviously demand all that a landlord may claim under other circumstances, provided a necessity for levying so much exists. A landlord may justifiably take as rent the full annual value of an estate, after deducting the expenses of cultivation and the ordinary profit upon his tenant's capital; the state, however, having no demand for money except for the public service, ought to take no more than may be necessary for this purpose; but, if necessary, it may (if the only party having a right in the land) take a landlord's share. There is nothing extravagant in regarding the state as the original proprietor of the soil—in some countries all the land is avowedly held under the crown—but it is certain that in India there are numerous rights connected with the land, of very ancient standing, and deserving of

* Afterwards Lord Teignmouth.

all respect. These rights, however, do not interfere with the right of the state, whatever it may be; and the latter must from necessity remain indefinite. A portion of the produce of the land, or a money payment of a certain amount in place of it, is assigned to defray the charges of the state. Supposing it to be insufficient, what is to be done? Is the country to be overrun by a foreign enemy, or subjected to any other calamity, because the ordinary funds of the state are exhausted, and no power exists of levying more? Such a position is an absurdity. The necessity of the state must be paramount to every other consideration. Its right is illimitable—it rides over all other rights. For the legislature of a country to set bounds to its own power of levying taxes, however great may be the necessity for them, would be to decree that on the occurrence of any extraordinary circumstances of difficulty or danger the state should be dissolved. Various proportions of the produce of the land have been referred to as the share of the sovereign under the Mahometan and Hindoo laws; but no one can suppose that the conduct of princes of either creed was ever governed by these rules. There can be no doubt that they took what they chose, and in the majority of instances all that they could obtain. The English government was probably the first that ever practically imposed a limit on its demands, and undoubtedly the only one that ever declared that such limit should under no circumstances be exceeded. Whatever opinion may be entertained on the propriety of such a limitation,

CHAP. XIV. it is certain that the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis was concluded under the influence of an extraordinary degree of ignorance. Little was known of the tenure by which the lands were held; little of the various rights connected with them; little of their value or their capability of improvement. The effects were in many cases such as might have reasonably been expected, though widely different from those which Lord Cornwallis contemplated.

The provinces permanently settled have undoubtedly prospered: being among the richest and most fertile portions of the British dominions in India, it must be a perverse system of government indeed which could materially check their prosperity; but a vast mass of inconvenience and suffering is directly traceable to the haste with which the important measure of a permanent settlement was carried out. The rights of hereditary cultivators were sacrificed. From the default of the zemindars, from their incompetence, and from other causes, the office often became vested in the hands of persons whose character or position in society commanded no respect, and who used it only as an instrument of extortion. Lawsuits in consequence of these circumstances abounded, and the privations and penalties which follow in the train of litigation were frightfully multiplied.*

* The evils arising out of the permanent settlement have been noticed by several able and well-informed writers. The late Marquis of Hastings, in an elaborate minute recorded by him as governor-general, and which will be found in the Revenue Ap-

Changes affecting minor branches of the revenue were made by Lord Cornwallis, but the land so far

pendix to the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, 1832, says :—" Among the questions connected with the operation of our system of revenue on the body of the people, there is a point which has been so strongly and so frequently forced upon me that I cannot refrain from laying my sentiments upon the subject before your honourable board. The situation of the village proprietors in large estates, in farms and jaghires, is such as to call loudly for the support of some legislative provision. This is a question which has not merely reference to the upper provinces; for within the circle of the perpetual settlement, the situation of this unfortunate class is yet more desperate; and though their cries for redress may have been stifled in many districts by their perceiving that uniform indisposition to attempt relieving them, which results from the difficulty of the operation, their sufferings have not, on that account, been less acute." After adverting to numerous instances, his lordship proceeds— " The cause of this is to be traced to the incorrectness of the principle assumed at the time of the perpetual settlement, when those with whom government entered into engagements were declared the sole proprietors of the soil. The under proprietors were considered to have no rights except such as might be conferred by *pottah* [lease], and there was no security for their obtaining these on reasonable terms, except an obviously empty injunction on the zemindar amicably to adjust and consolidate the amount of his claims. It is well known (and even if it were questionable, the practice of the provinces which have more lately fallen under our dominion would set the doubt at rest), that the cultivating zemindars [proprietary ryots] were, by a custom more ancient than all law, entitled to a certain share of the produce of their lands; and that the rest, whether collected by pergunnah zemindars or by the officers of government, was collected as the huk [tax or fee] of the circar. This indefeasible right of the cultivating proprietors to a fixed share was annihilated by our directing that pottahs should be executed for a money payment, in which all the claims of the zemindars should be consolidated. The under proprietor was thus left to the mercy of the zemindar, to whose demands there were no prescribed limits. The zemindar offered a pottah on

CHAP. XIV. transcends in importance all other sources of income, that a particular reference to those of inferior value

his own terms. If the under proprietor refused it he was ejected, and the courts supported the ejectment. If the under proprietor conceived that he could contest at law the procedure, a regular suit, under all the disadvantages to which he is known to be exposed, was his only resource; but when, after years of anxiety and of expense, the case was at last brought to a hearing, he lost his action, because it was proved that the pottah was offered and refused, and there was no criterion to which he could refer as a means of proving that the rate was exorbitant. The framers of the perpetual settlement declared their incompetency to fix any criterion for the adjustment of these disputes. The declaration stands recorded in our legislative code, and to the present day the omission has not been supplied. The consequence of the omission in the first instance was a perpetual litigation between the zemindars and the under proprietors, the former offering pottahs on their own terms, the latter not having forgotten that they possessed rights independent of all pottahs, and refusing demands they conceived unconscionable. When, at last, the revenue of government was affected by the confusion which ensued, without inquiring into the root of the evil, the legislature contented itself with arming those who were under engagements with the government with additional powers, so as to enable them to realize their demands in the first instance whether right or wrong; a procedure which unavoidably led to extreme and grievous oppression. * * * * * It has been urged, however, that though the rights of the former cultivating proprietors have been suffered by the regulations to pass away *sub silentio*, still as the zemindar and his tenants have reciprocal wants, their mutual necessities must drive them to an amicable adjustment. The reciprocity is not, however, so clear. The zemindar certainly cannot do without tenants; but he wants them upon his own terms, and he knows that if he can get rid of the hereditary proprietors who claim a right to terms independent of what he may vouchsafe to give, he will obtain the means of substituting men of his own; and such is the redundancy of the cultivating class, that there will never be a difficulty of procuring ryots to engage on terms only just sufficient to ensure bare maintenance to the

may be spared. Some notice, however, is demanded of the new machinery created for dis- CHAP. XIV

engager. If it were the intention of our regulations to deprive every class but the large proprietors who engaged with government of any share in the profits of the land, that effect has been fully accomplished in Bengal. No compensation can now be made for the injustice done to those who used to enjoy a share of these profits under the law of the empire, and under institutions anterior to all record, for the transfer of their property to the rajahs."

Colonel Galloway, writing upon this subject, says: "I have already given Lord Cornwallis credit for his benevolent intentions, yet it must be admitted there appears throughout the whole of his lordship's measures a precipitancy and a want of regard for ancient rights not easy to be accounted for. This is evident in most of his minutes. I select the following paragraph from that of the 18th of September, 1789. 'Although, however, I am not only of opinion that the zemindars have the best right, but from being persuaded that nothing could be so ruinous to the public interest as that the land should be retained as the property of government [never dreaming of the claim of the people], I am also convinced that, failing the claim of right of the zemindars, it would be necessary for the public good to grant a right of property in the soil to them, or to persons of other description. I think it unnecessary to enter into any discussion of the grounds upon which their right appears to be founded.' An avowal such as this was evidently beyond the power of the governor-general. It was evidently contrary to the law enacted by the Parliament of England. He was not to *grant* rights, but to *confirm* them, and to protect the people in their rights existing. It can therefore only be interpreted as a proof that his lordship did not intend that his benevolence should be restrained. The measures adopted at that period have more the appearance of those of a good and well-meaning person, accidentally placed at the head of a new nation, passing his first acts of legislation, than of one charged with the government of a people the very slaves of method, of rule, of habit, and of their institutions; whose very foibles, even absurdities, deserved consideration, because to them they are neither foibles nor absurdities, but matters of

CHAP. XIV. pensing civil and criminal justice. One of the most decided changes was the severance of judicial

importance. How then it so happened that their most sacred, most valuable rights should have been thus held as nothing, is indeed difficult to conceive. It was a blameable neglect of the interests of the people. The very first point to be inquired into was the claim to the soil, the right of property in which was to be *confirmed*, not *granted*. Mr. Grant argued in favour of the right of government; Mr. Shore, that of the zemindar; Lord Cornwallis despises all right, and fairly avows 'that he thinks it unnecessary to enter into the discussion of the right to the soil.' But the very first resolution of government framed by his lordship bound him to make this inquiry; for it says, 'resolved, that a new settlement be made *with the actual proprietors of the soil*,' &c. Now the Act of Parliament of 1784 completely recognizes the right of possession by the people according to the law of India, and that their tribute and rents should be fixed agreeably to that law. Before this final limitation of the revenue was made, however, it might well be supposed that those who did thus most rashly act, had by the most painful examination, research, and investigation, discovered data sufficient to enable them to make a fair settlement for a limited time. No such thing! Mr. Shore indeed urges this in the strongest terms. He says in his minute of June, 1789, 'We require first a knowledge of the rents paid by the ryots compared with the produce; 2nd, of the collections of the zemindars, and of their payments to government; 3rd, detailed accounts of the alienated lands, shewing the quantity, the grantor, grantee, dates of grants, the occupant, to see how far resumption can take place. All the material part of this information is wanting'!!! The information they possessed was not sufficient to warrant them in settling the bazaar duties of a village. Our knowledge of India was much too limited then, it is so now, to furnish data for an act so important. They knew not the resources of the country. They even discarded the documents that were pressed upon them by the head record-keeper, at the time, Mr. Grant, who had taken great pains to exhibit the sources and the amount of revenue levied by our predecessory governments of the provinces. They did not even know to whom the lands or property belonged."—Observations on the Law, and Constitution,

authority from that connected with the revenue. CHAP.
The power heretofore exercised by zemindars was

and present Government of India, by Lieutenant Colonel Galloway, 2nd edit. 1832, pages 175 to 177.

Sir Edward Colebrook (an advocate for a permanent settlement), in a minute recorded on the Bengal Consultations, in July, 1820, says: "The errors of the permanent settlement in Bengal were two-fold: first, in the sacrifice of what may be denominated *the yeomanry*, by merging all village rights, whether of property or of occupancy, in the all-devouring recognition of the zemindar's permanent property in the soil; and secondly, in the sacrifice of the peasantry by one sweeping enactment, which left the zemindar to make his settlement with them on such terms as he might choose to require. Government indeed reserved to itself the power of legislating in favour of the tenants, but no such regulation has ever taken place; on the contrary, every subsequent enactment has been founded on the declared object of strengthening the zemindar's hands."

Sir Charles Metcalf, in a minute, 7th November, 1830, makes the following remarks:—"The Bengal permanent settlement was, in fact, the transfer of the landowners from the power of the government to the power of perpetual farmers, who, having no right in the soil themselves, or whatever right they may have had, if they had any, have been practically enabled by that settlement, against its professed design, to destroy or impair the rights of all landowners and landholders included within the large districts consigned to those farmers respectively."

The ability and information possessed by those from whom the above opinions are quoted command for them respectful attention; but such opinions have not been restricted to individuals—they have been held and expressed by the two authorities to whom the legislature has committed the administration of the government of India. In a letter addressed, in 1817, to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East-India Company, by Mr. Canning, then President of the Board of Commissioners, the following four results are stated as points upon which an agreement had been established between the court and the board, after long correspondence and discussion:—"1st. That the system of 1793, though originating in the most enlightened views and the most

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benevolent motives, and though having produced considerable good, has nevertheless been attended in the course of its operation with no small portion of evil to the people for whose happiness it was intended. 2nd. That the same views and motives which dictated the original introduction of the permanent settlement twenty-five years ago, would not, after the experience which has been had of it, justify the immediate introduction of the same system into provinces for which a system of revenue administration has yet to be settled. 3rd. That the creation of an artificial class of intermediate proprietors between the government and the cultivators of the soil, where a class of intermediate proprietors does not exist in the native institutions of the country, would be highly inexpedient. 4th. That no conclusive step ought to be taken towards a final settlement of the yet unsettled provinces until it shall have been examined, and, if possible, ascertained by diligent research and comparison of collected testimonies, as well as by accurate survey of the lands to be settled, how far the principles of a system which would bring the government into immediate contact with the great body of the people can be practicably and usefully applied to them."

Quotations bearing witness to the mass of abuse and wrong inherent in the permanent settlement of 1793 might be greatly multiplied, but the above may be deemed sufficient to support the assertions in the text. The difficulty of ascertaining the various rights connected with the land appears to have been the cause which deterred Lord Cornwallis from undertaking the task. He felt that it must be a work of time, and his desire to create what he believed would be an independent landed aristocracy was too powerful to brook delay. He preferred the sacrifice of right to the mortification of suffering a favourite project to sleep. The difficulty of ascertaining the rights of parties, the probability that they vary in different districts, and the readiness of the principal zemindars to usurp the rights of their inferiors, are pointed out in part of the examination of Henry St. George Tucker, Esq., before the Committee of the House of Commons, 1832. In answer to a question, whether any detailed inquiry had been made in 1793, into the rights and properties of hereditary cultivators?

ministration of civil justice the governor-general and members of council were to form one chief

Mr. Tucker said—" If it be intended to ask whether there was a general classification of rights, either under the permanent settlement or by the regulations of 1793, I should say that no such classification was attempted; for my belief is, that the peasantry were upon a different footing in different provinces, and that it would have been extremely difficult to have ascertained precisely the rights of all parties, under usage or otherwise. With respect to Bengal proper, we have a timid and feeble peasantry, and I should very much doubt whether this peasantry ever obtained what may be called rights of property in the land. When we ascend to the western provinces, beginning with Behar and Benares, we find a different race of men, a bolder and more sturdy peasantry, men who may have acquired some rights in the land: in point of fact, the malic mocuddums and village zemindars of Behar, Benares, and the western provinces, have, I believe, rights; and in regard to Benares, I should say that those rights are recognized by the regulations of 1795. The zemindar of Benares for some time opposed the recognition of the rights of the village zemindars in that province when the permanent settlement was first undertaken by the late Mr. Duncan; but he, the rajah, afterwards waived his objection, and the settlement was finally made, with his concurrence, with the village zemindars. In the ceded and conquered provinces, where I was employed for a short period, and where I was deputed in 1807 for the purpose of forming a permanent settlement, one of my great difficulties arose from the uncertainty which appeared to me to exist with respect to landed tenures in that country. The superior landholder is there designated *talookdar*, and there were at the same time under him village zemindars, who appeared to me to have certain rights in the land, although the revenue was paid generally through the talookdar or principal landholder." So strong was the conviction of Mr. Tucker of the danger of sacrificing both private rights and public interests by a hasty and premature settlement to be made once and for ever, that although himself a distinguished advocate of the principle of a permanent settlement, he, together with his colleague holding the same opinion, felt bound to repre-

CHAP. XIV. court, called the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, which was to hear appeals and control the exercise

sent to the government that it would not be expedient then to carry into effect the object which the commissioners had been deputed to accomplish. These representations were received much in the spirit in which the suggestions of Mr. Shore were received by Lord Cornwallis. The government was well disposed to repeat the error of that nobleman, after a degree of experience which deprived them of all claim to benefit by the only excuse which can be offered for its first commission; but, happily, they were overruled from home.

The source of the misconception which prevailed with regard to the rights attached to the land was that which has produced so much error and so much mischief in other parts of the world as well as in India—the confounding words with things, and the regarding uniformity of name as indicative of uniformity of character or office. This frequent mistake is noticed in a dispatch addressed by the Court of Directors to the government of Bengal, 2nd January, 1829, in reference to some transactions in the western provinces. The court observe:—"In England there are names which carry with them the idea of certain definite rights, more especially in the land. The terms freeholder, copyholder, leaseholder, denote persons to whom an ascertained amount of rights belongs; and are terms which may in general be safely taken as evidence of such rights. Zemindar, mocuddum, malguzar, and other names, were found by our servants attached to parties in India having rights in the soil; and they applied to them the same sort of construction as that to which they were accustomed in regard to the names in England which do denote certain determinate rights in the land. The consequences were very unhappy. Wherever they found parties bearing any of the above-mentioned names, they supposed them to be owners of a certain fixed amount of rights; and when they were called upon to make an award, they too frequently made it in conformity with this anticipation: that is, they assumed those same names, zemindar, mocuddum, and so on, as being in themselves conclusive evidence of the existence of certain rights, without seeking any further evidence on the subject, or making the proper investigation of the case; and in that manner frequently awarded rights to parties which

of the power of the inferior courts. No appeal could be made to the Court of Sudder Dewanny CHAP. XIV.

did not belong to them, while they necessarily by the same act took away from others the rights which were truly theirs. Among these prepossessions of the English functionaries none seem to have more frequently led them into errors than their free conceptions with regard to the parties who engage with government for the revenue payable from any portion of the land. In England, it generally happens that he who holds land immediately of the sovereign, and between whom and the sovereign there is no intermediate holder, has the full property in the land; and where there are other parties who have an interest in the same land, it is an interest held of the first party, and dependant upon his. The collectors and judges under our governments in India seem at first to have very generally proceeded upon a similar idea with respect to the party whom they found in the established practice of engaging with government for the assessment of the lands, whether of a village or any greater extent; that is, they regarded him as proprietor of the lands in their own sense of the word proprietor, and the interest of all the other inhabitants as included in his all-comprehending interest, and dependant upon it."

It is, perhaps, the general opinion, that we are slow in introducing improvement into our Indian possessions. But the truth is, that in the introduction of what has been called, and was meant to be, improvement, we have often been too precipitate. Some observations of Sir Thomas Munro, in a minute recorded on the consultations of the government of Madras, 31st December, 1824, are on this subject entirely in point. He says—"We are now masters of a very extensive empire, and we should endeavour to secure and improve it by a good internal administration. Our experience is too short to judge what rules are best calculated for this purpose. It is only within the last thirty years that we have here begun to acquire any practical knowledge; a longer period must probably elapse before we can ascertain what is best. Such a period is as nothing in the existence of a people; but we act as if this were as limited as the life of an individual. We proceed, in a country of which we know little or nothing, as if we knew every thing, and as if every thing must be done now and nothing could be done hereafter. We feel our ignorance of Indian revenue, and the difficulties arising from it; and instead of seeking

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Adawlut unless the sum in dispute amounted to one thousand rupees. The courts immediately under

to remedy it by acquiring more knowledge, we endeavour to get rid of the difficulty by precipitately making permanent settlements, which relieve us from the troublesome task of minute or accurate investigation, and which are better adapted to perpetuate our ignorance than to protect the people. We must not be led away by fanciful theories founded on European models, which will inevitably end in disappointment. We must not too hastily declare any rights permanent, lest we give to one class what belongs to another. We must proceed patiently; and as our knowledge of the manners and customs of the people and the nature and resources of the country increases, frame gradually from the existing institutions such a system as may advance the prosperity of the country and be satisfactory to the people. The knowledge most necessary for this end is that of the landed property and its assessment; for the land is not only the great source of the public revenue, but on its fair and moderate assessment depend the comfort and happiness of the people. * * * * * *

Our great error in this country, during a long course of years, has been too much precipitation in attempting to better the condition of the people, with hardly any knowledge of the means by which it was to be accomplished, and indeed without seeming to think that any other than good intentions were necessary. It is a dangerous system of government, in a country of which our knowledge is very imperfect, to be constantly urged by the desire of settling every thing permanently; to do every thing in a hurry, and in consequence wrong; and, in our zeal for permanency, to put the remedy out of our reach. The ruling vice of our government is innovation; and its innovation has been so little guided by a knowledge of the people, that though made after what was thought by us to be mature discussion, must appear to them as little better than the result of mere caprice. We have, in our anxiety to make every thing as English as possible, in a country which resembles England in nothing, attempted to create at once throughout extensive provinces a kind of landed property which has never existed in them; and in the pursuit of this object we have relinquished the rights which the sovereign always possessed in the soil; and we have in many cases deprived the real owners, the occupant ryots, of their proprietary rights, and

this were called provincial courts. Like that above them, they were courts of revision and appeal with relation to the courts below; but they were also, to a certain extent, courts of primary jurisdiction. In each of these courts were to be three judges, chosen from among the covenanted servants of the Company. They were empowered to try, in the first instance, such suits as should be transmitted to them for the purpose by government or the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, and to order their decision in such cases to be executed by the judges of the zillah or city courts; to receive original suits or complaints which any judge of the zillah or city courts had refused or neglected to entertain or proceed with, and to cause such judge to hear and determine such case; to receive petitions respecting matters depending in the courts below, and give directions therein to the judges in such courts; to receive any charges which might be preferred against the zillah or city judges for corruption, and forward them to the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, as well as to report to that court on any negligence or misconduct of such judges. They were also to hear appeals from the zillah courts if preferred within three months from the passing of the decree appealed against, or after that period, for sufficient reason. Whenever it should appear to a provincial court

bestowed them on zemindars and other imaginary landlords. Changes like these can never effect a permanent settlement in any country; they are rather calculated to unsettle whatever was before deemed permanent."

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that a suit had not been sufficiently investigated in the zillah court, they might either take such further evidence as they might deem necessary, and give judgment thereon, or remit the suit back to the zillah court with instructions. The decisions of the provincial courts were to be final for sums not exceeding one thousand rupees.

The next class of judicial establishments consisted of the zillah (or district) and city civil courts. Over each of these a European judge presided. He was assisted by a register, also a European covenanted servant, and in some cases by an assistant similarly qualified. As all questions relating to succession, inheritance, marriage, caste, and all usages and institutions of the like character, were to be decided by the Mahometan law with respect to Mahometans, and by the Hindoo law with regard to Hindoos, each court was provided with a native officer of each persuasion, presumed to be well versed in the principles of law as expounded in their respective creeds; these persons acting as assessors to the judge, who received their written opinions, and regulated his judgment accordingly. The pleadings were directed to be in writing, and to consist of, first, a plaint; secondly, an answer; thirdly, a reply; and fourthly, a rejoinder. If any thing material to the suit had been omitted, either in the plaint or answer, one supplemental pleading of each kind, but no more, was to be admitted. The pleadings might be written, at the option of the parties, either in Persian, Bengalee, or Hindoostance. The pleadings

being completed, the courts were to proceed to hear evidence, either written or oral, and the latter was to be reduced to writing in one of the languages previously mentioned. The decree followed, and this it was provided should contain the name of every witness examined, the title of every paper read, and a statement of the amount or value of the property in dispute. These courts were empowered to take cognizance of all suits and complaints respecting the succession or right to real or personal property, land, rents, revenues, debts, accounts, contracts, marriage, caste, claims to damages for injuries, and generally all suits of a civil nature, if the property sought to be recovered, or the defendant against whom the suit was brought, were actually within the limits of the court's jurisdiction. Those limits were the same with the boundaries of the zillah or city in which the courts might be established. The power of these courts extended to all persons not British subjects, in the sense in which those words were then legally applied. European subjects of the King of Great Britain were consequently exempted; but it was provided that none excepting officers of the King's or the Company's army, or civil servants of the Company, should reside within the jurisdiction of any zillah or city court, at a greater distance than ten miles from Calcutta, without executing a bond rendering themselves amenable to the court for sums not exceeding five hundred rupees. European officers of the government, as well as native officers, were also declared amenable to the courts

CHAP. XIV. for acts done in their official capacity in breach of the regulations or laws enacted by the local government. Those regulations formed the code by which the decisions of the courts were to be guided, save in cases where the native law was permitted to operate. Where no specific rule might exist for their guidance, the judges were directed to act according to equity, justice, and good conscience. An appeal lay to the provincial courts in all suits without exception.

To relieve the zillah and city courts from part of the business supposed, from the inferior value of the matter in dispute, to be of inferior importance, the registers of those courts were empowered to hear and decide causes in which the amount or value of the thing at issue did not exceed two hundred rupees, liberty of appeal to the court to which the register was attached being in all cases reserved.*

Still further to relieve the zillah and city courts, as well as in the expectation, which in other countries has been so often held out and so seldom realized, of bringing substantial justice to every man's door, inferior judicatures were constituted, called courts of native commissioners. These commissioners were to exercise their functions in three different characters: as aumeens, or referees; as salis, or arbitrators; and as moonsiffs, or judges exercising original jurisdiction. Their authority was restricted to suits

* It will be recollected that the constitution and powers of the courts are described as they were established by Lord Cornwallis. They were soon subjected to modification.

in which the value of the thing in litigation did not exceed fifty rupees. They were to be nominated by the judges of the zillah and city courts, and to be approved by the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut. To the latter court alone was given the power of removing them. The native commissioners were to be sworn to the administration of their duties, and to be liable to prosecution for corruption, or for oppressive and unwarranted acts of authority—an important provision in a country where judgment had been so long bought and sold. In their character of referees, the native commissioners were to try such causes as might be remitted to them by the zillah courts, proceeding in the manner prescribed for the conduct of suits in those courts. As arbitrators, they might decide disputes not brought before the court, provided the parties executed bonds, engaging to abide by the decision of the commissioners, and to make the award a decree of court. In no case were these commissioners to have the power of enforcing their own decrees. Monthly reports of causes decided, such reports being accompanied by all original documents, were to be made to the zillah court to which the commissioner was immediately subject, and that court was to enforce the decision reported, if not appealed against within thirty days; the power of appeal being subject to no other limitation.

In addition to the establishment of courts of various grades, and the distribution of business among them, it was attempted to improve the cha-

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racter of the vakeels or agents who might be employed in them. Previously, all that a suitor did not perform in his own person was committed either to some servant or dependent, or to men who were ready to transact any business for any person who would employ them, but who were not recognized by the courts, nor subject to any regulations. In the former case, the suitor was represented, and his interests maintained, by persons for the most part entirely ignorant of law of any description. In the latter, the amount of the advocate's knowledge seldom extended beyond a slight acquaintance with the ordinary forms of proceeding, and a familiarity with all the arts of chicane. It was proposed, therefore, to introduce a better class of vakeels, by ensuring the possession of some measure of qualification for the office which they undertook, and by subjecting them to due control. The appointment of these officers was vested in the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut. They were to be selected from the students in the Mahometan college at Calcutta and the Hindoo college at Benares. If these establishments were unable to supply the requisite number, any natives of good character and competent ability might be appointed. They were to be sworn to the due discharge of their duties, and to be remunerated according to a regulated table of fees. A small retaining fee was to be paid on the engagement of the vakeel; his subsequent emoluments were deferred till the termination of the suit, when he was to receive a commission on the amount involved,

varying from five per cent., upon the smaller sums, to one-half per cent., upon those of larger amount. They were liable to suspension by the court in which they practised for promoting or encouraging litigious suits, for fraud, or for gross misbehaviour of any kind. The suspension was to be reported to the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, by whom the vakeel might be either deprived of his privilege or fined.

Such were the main provisions for the administration of civil justice. In one respect the task of legislating for the exercise of criminal judicature was less embarrassed by difficulty. There was little or no conflict of laws, criminal proceedings having been almost universally conducted on the principles of the law of Mahomet. The Koran was necessarily the chief authority; the sayings of the Prophet, stored up in the memory of his followers and handed down by tradition—perhaps occasionally invented to answer existing emergencies—supplied some of the deficiences of the Koran, which were neither few nor unimportant; the opinions and judgments of learned Mahometans, cotemporaries with the Prophet, and who enjoyed the benefit of personal communication with him, formed another resource; and lastly, came reports of decided cases by judges of later date, who had ventured to exercise their own judgment where that of their predecessors afforded no guide. The law thus obtained was not of the best description, and its administration, it is unnecessary to say, was corrupt and venal. Hastings endeavoured to cor-

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rect some of the evils which existed both in the law and the judges, by subjecting both to the control of the British government. For eighteen months he personally exercised this control, but at the end of that period, the numerous demands upon his time and attention rendered it impracticable to continue the labour which he had imposed on himself, and the duty of watching and superintending the administration of criminal justice once more passed into Mahometan hands. Some years afterwards, the principal European officers in the revenue and civil departments were invested with a portion of magisterial authority, but the greater and more important portion of the duties connected with the restraint and punishment of crime was vested in the Naib Nazim and his subordinate officers. No further alteration was made till Lord Cornwallis submitted to his council proposals for amending both the law and the courts by which it was administered. The alterations proposed in the law were three:—First, that the criminality of homicide should be judged of not by the weapon or means used, but by the intention of the slayer, however discoverable. By this, a variety of curious and mischievous distinctions were got rid of. The second proposal was, that the heirs of a murdered person should not be permitted to prevent the punishment of the murderer—a privilege which the Mahometan law allowed. The third suggested the abolition of the barbarous punishment of mutilation, which the light of Mecca also tolerated, and the substitution in its place of imprisonment,

sons. The village watchmen were declared subject to the orders of this functionary, and were required to give him all the assistance and information which they could afford.

The above sketch of the judicial arrangements of Lord Cornwallis may appear to possess little either of interest or instruction; but some notice of them was called for, first, because they were the earliest arrangements which could aspire to any higher character than that of temporary expedients; and, secondly, because it is upon the improvement of the internal government of the country that the reputation of Lord Cornwallis has, in a great degree, been rested. The effects of the important revenue change effected under his administration have been briefly noticed; the judicial changes could scarcely aggravate the evils previously existing, but they had perhaps little effect in abating them. The amount of power was altogether unequal to the labour to be performed—the number of European functionaries was too small—in many cases their acquaintance with Indian character too limited to allow of their doing much good, while the native agents were often, it is to be feared, too corrupt to effect any thing but evil. If it were an object of the change in the mode of administering civil justice to increase litigation, the plan certainly succeeded. Suits multiplied, till those who should have decided them looked at the files of their courts in despair, convinced that the life of man was insufficient to clear off the overwhelming mass of arrears. Parties who felt aggrieved, and

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who saw themselves partially excluded from redress by law, sought it in a more summary manner, and breaches of the peace from this cause were frequent. It would be unjust to charge the whole of these evils upon the judicial plans of Lord Cornwallis. In a country which had long been without any settled or well-ordered judicial tribunals, wrongs would multiply, causes of complaint abound. If in connection with this consideration reference be had to the love of litigation which forms so prominent a part of the native character, it will be seen that the governor-general had no easy task to perform. His great error appears to have been that he did not duly appreciate the difficulty of that which he undertook to effect. Like most Indian reformers, he expected to do at once that which required a long series of years, and like most Indian reformers also, he evinced an unwise and unwarrantable disregard of native institutions. His police arrangements were thought to be inferior to those which they superseded, and in spite of all the provision made either for the punishment or the prevention of offences, crime continued to flourish with a luxuriance which shewed at once how deeply it had struck its roots in the soil, and how inadequate were the means provided by the governor-general for its eradication. Year after year some change was made in the system established by Lord Cornwallis; experiment succeeded experiment, each tending to confirm a truth of which European innovators have so often been forgetful, that it is impossible by a stroke of the

hard labour, or pecuniary fine. Christian and European feelings were thus brought to the improvement of the code of Mahomet in various important particulars. The proposals of the governor-general were adopted and embodied in regulations, which, however, manifested a singular tenderness towards the law which they were designed to improve. The authority of that law was still recognized—the native officer still expounded its decree for the information of the European judge; but the latter was forbidden, in certain cases, to act upon the opinion thus given. If the law of Mahomet prescribed mutilation of person for any offence, the officer declared that such was the will of the Prophet; but the punishment was not inflicted. It was commuted for a term of imprisonment, varying according to the degree of severity maintained by the law which was thus superseded. The threatened mulct of two limbs subjected the convict to double the term of imprisonment incurred by him whom the law of Mahomet would have deprived but of one. Again, in cases where the heir of a murdered person refused to prosecute, the native law officer was to be called upon to state what would have been the decree of the law had the heir been of sterner mind, and then the same sentence was to be passed as though the right to prosecute had not been waived. Further, the rules of evidence, according to the Mahometan law, were not altogether such as the British government approved. It did not, however, venture to interfere with the integrity of the holy code—the

rules were left to be still solemnly enunciated by the native adviser of the court; but where the evidence of a witness was impugned by reason of his religion, the officer was called upon to say what would have been the decree of the law had this defect not existed—which being done, sentence was to be passed precisely as though it did not exist.

To put in motion this remarkable combination of Mahometan and European law, the means resorted to were nearly the same as those employed for civil proceedings. The governor-general and council formed a high court of revision and control, called the Sudder Nizamut Adawlut; the provincial courts were constituted courts of circuit within their respective localities, throughout which they were to make two gaol deliveries in each year; the zillah and city judges were to be magistrates exercising the usual authority of the office, both in regard to preliminary proceedings in criminal cases of importance and in the cognizance and punishment of petty offences.

Zemindars, and persons of similar condition, had formerly been responsible for the peace of the country, and whatever of police authority existed was exercised by them. From these duties they were now relieved. Each zillah was divided into police jurisdictions, superintended by a darogah, a native officer, who was empowered to receive charges of criminal offences, and to remit the accused to a magistrate, taking security for the appearance of the prosecutors and witnesses. The darogah was also authorized to apprehend vagrants and suspicious per-

pen to change the character of a people, or to render either useful or popular, institutions not framed with due regard to national habits and peculiarities. CHAP. XI

Lord Cornwallis did not return to Bengal after his visit to Madras, undertaken with a view of reducing the French settlements on the coast of Coromandel. He quitted India in August, 1793, A. D. 1793. and was succeeded as governor-general by Sir John Shore, a civil servant of the Company, who had been a member of council at Bengal, and who, it will be remembered, when the permanent settlement was in contemplation, had offered some suggestions for securing the rights of the inferior landholders, which Lord Cornwallis had disregarded. Sir John Shore was not a man of brilliant abilities, but he enjoyed, and justly, a high degree of the confidence of those whom he served. His reputation for knowledge in matters of Indian revenue was great, and his upright and honourable character universally admitted.

The attention of the new governor-general was soon directed to the circumstances and position of the two powers in concert with whom his predecessor had undertaken the reduction of Mysore. By the treaty concluded by the three powers—the English, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas—previously to the commencement of the war with Tippoo, it was provided, that if after the conclusion of peace with that prince he should molest or attack either of the contracting parties, the others should join to punish him; but the mode and conditions of effect-

CHAP. XIV. ing this object were left for future settlement. On the termination of the war, Lord Cornwallis had proposed the reduction of this conditional stipulation into a formal treaty of guarantee; but he was desirous of clogging the engagement with a condition which would without doubt have left either party at liberty to evade the performance of the treaty, and without much danger of incurring the imputation of bad faith. If one of the allies were attacked, the others were not to be bound to render assistance until they were convinced that justice was on their side, and that all measures of conciliation were fruitless; and, as no one can estimate the degree of conviction which operates on the mind of another, it must be obvious that such a treaty would have been to all practical purposes a nullity. If the allies of the party attacked thought it their interest to assist their neighbour, they would assist him, and this might be relied upon without any treaty. If their interests inclined them to take another course, they could deny the justice of the cause of their ally, and refuse to aid him. Still Lord Cornwallis must not be too hastily blamed for insisting upon an article which would have had the effect of neutralizing the engagement into which it was introduced. One of the parties with whom he had to deal was the Mahratta state, and Mahratta notions of right and wrong are endowed with such convenient flexibility, that it is quite impossible to estimate, with any approach to accuracy, whither a positive engagement to defend them may lead. The

Mahrattas had some demands for chout, both on Tippoo and the Nizam, which they did not mean to abandon; and the proposal of Lord Cornwallis was met by counter proposals—the Mahratta chiefs being anxious to obtain the assistance of the British to carry out their own views, but averse to any alliance which should impose upon them a necessity for peace and moderation. These proposals were distasteful alike to the Nizam and the British government, and the latter, after some protracted discussion, desisted from pressing the execution of any treaty whatever. The Nizam did not share in the reluctance of the Mahrattas to execute the proposed treaty; his interests and his wishes disposed him to seek British protection, however vague the conditions on which it was to be rendered. He represented that the failure of one of three parties to fulfil its engagements afforded no justification to the other two for the violation of theirs, and he urged the conclusion of the projected treaty before the departure of Lord Cornwallis from India, but in vain. That nobleman left the relations of the British government in this respect in a most unsatisfactory state, and Sir John Shore had to contend with difficulties from which his predecessor seems to have been glad to escape. CHAP.

The long-impending storm at length burst. The Mahrattas attacked the Nizam. According to existing engagements, the British were not required to take arms in this case; both parties were their allies, and though generally bound to assist either

CAP. XIV. against Tippoo, they were under no obligation to assist one against the other. But Tippoo was about to join the Mahrattas, and the Nizam had therefore, to all appearance, a claim to call for the assistance of his British allies. He did call for it, but without success. Sir John Shore on this occasion, while he evinced no extraordinary aptitude for the government of a great state, displayed a talent for casuistry which, if he had devoted himself to the legal profession, must have obtained for him a high reputation in the science of special pleading. He determined, that the alliance being tripartite, the secession of one party put an end to all obligations which it imposed upon the remaining two. He accordingly resolved to surrender the Nizam to the combined power of the treacherous Mahrattas, with whom fidelity is a word destitute of meaning, and of Tippoo, infuriated by recent degradation, and burning for revenge on those who had aided in subjecting him to it. The result, in one respect, was less disastrous than might have been anticipated. Tippoo was too much occupied at home to render active assistance to the Mahrattas; but the latter were sufficiently strong without his aid to reduce the Nizam to purchase peace on ignominious terms. Such was the policy of Sir John Shore—a man distinguished by many excellent qualities, but altogether out of his place in society as governor-general of the British possessions in India. He maintained an insecure and unstable peace, and the price paid for the equivocal advantage was the honour of the

country which he represented. "It may appear difficult," says Sir John Malcolm, "to fix the nature or extent of the exertions which a state would be warranted in making upon any occasion to maintain its reputation and character, because those are qualities of which the precise value can never be ascertained; but the history of every nation in the universe sufficiently proves that they have always been most cherished by states which were rising or in the zenith of their power, and only neglected by those which were in their decline or on the eve of dissolution. If this rule be just with regard to states in general, how much more must it apply to that extraordinary empire which the British nation has founded in the East! For there can be no doubt that empire is held solely by opinion; or, in other words, by that respect and awe with which the comparative superiority of our knowledge, justice, and system of rule have inspired the inhabitants of our own territories; and that confidence in our truth, reliance on our faith, and dread of our arms, which is impressed on every nation in India."*

The Nizam was greatly incensed by the conduct of the British government; and, on his return to Hyderabad, he intimated a desire to dispense with the services of two English battalions, which he subsidized, and which, being precluded from taking any part in the war with the Mahrattas, had been employed, while it continued, in maintaining the internal tranquillity of the Nizam's dominions.

* Sketch of the Political History of India, pp. 168, 169.

CHAP. XIV. The effects of the ultra-pacific policy of the governor-general now began to appear. The English corps, at the request of the Nizam, was withdrawn, and that prince, with a view to supply their place, immediately applied himself to increase and improve a large body of regular infantry, which constituted the main strength of his army, and was commanded by French officers. His attachment to the French was naturally strengthened by the hostile feelings engendered by the defection of his English ally, and the influence of the former power was aided by constant and exaggerated statements of the wonderful progress of the French arms in Europe. The British resident endeavoured to impress the Nizam with a sense of the inexpediency of the course which he was pursuing, but without effect. What effect, indeed, could have been expected from such representations under such circumstances? The governor-general himself addressed the Nizam, but to no better purpose; and Sir John Shore now found that the result of his policy had been to hand over the Nizam, his power and resources, from the English to the nation with which, in Europe, they were waging a war of unparalleled difficulty. Whatever may be the faults of the French people, it is certain that indifference to the power and glory of their country is not among them. M. Raymond, who commanded the force which has been referred to, was indefatigable in labouring to increase the influence of the French in the Deccan. His battalions carried the colours of the republic one and indivisible, and the

cap of liberty graced their buttons. A detachment was moved to Kurpa, near the British frontiers, and through the agency of its officers a mutiny was excited in a battalion of sepoys on the Madras establishment. A correspondence was opened with the French prisoners at Pondicherry, and no probable means neglected of once more establishing the French interest in India on the ruins of that of the English. All appearances boded ill for the latter power, and a crisis was obviously approaching when even the argumentative dexterity of the governor-general might be useless. It was averted by the occurrence of an event, unexpected alike by the Nizam, by the party which had foolishly lost his friendship, and by that which had succeeded them in possession of it. This was a rebellion excited by Ali Jah, the Nizam's son. The alarm this occasioned led not only to the recal of the detachment from Kurpa to be employed in suppressing the rebellion, but to an earnest appeal for the co-operation of the English government for the same object. The governor-general did not now hesitate. Assistance was promptly dispatched, but before it reached the scene of action M. Raymond had put down the rebellion and taken prisoner its author. Ali Jah released his father from all further apprehension on his account, by taking poison.

The judicious improvement of the opportunity afforded for manifesting a regard to the interests of the Nizam was not without effect, and the English influence at the court of Hyderabad might have been

CHAP. XIV. greatly strengthened, had not Sir John Shore been rendered insensible to every other consideration by his fear of offending the Mahrattas. Some English adventurers were encouraged to enter the Nizam's service, in the hope that they might be useful in counteracting the views of the French; but the scheme entirely failed, and the British government derived from this project little of either credit or advantage.

The progress of events, however, continued to be rather beneficial to the interests of the Nizam, and not unfavourable to those of the English. The Peishwa, in whose name several chiefs had so long carried on their own plans of personal advantage and aggrandizement, terminated his life by an act of self-destruction. A series of intrigues followed, in the course of which the Nizam had an opportunity of recommending himself to several of the parties engaged, and, in consequence, his principal minister, who had been given up as a hostage for the performance of some of the disgraceful conditions of the late peace, was set at liberty, and some territorial cessions extorted from the Nizam were relinquished. The passions and divisions of the Mahratta chieftains thus interposed in favour of the Nizam, whom his British ally would have left to be crushed by the powerful and unprincipled confederacy to which they belonged.

A. D. 1795. The year 1795 was marked by the death of the notorious Mahomet Ali, and the question how the affairs of his ill-governed dominions should in future

be administered, gave rise to a sharp dispute between the government of Madras, at the head of which was Lord Hobart, and the controlling government of Bengal. Lord Hobart, without previous communication with the governor-general, proposed to the successor of Mahomet Ali the cession of certain territories, with a view partly to the security of the Company's claims, and partly to the relief of the country from the frightful mass of oppression and abuse to which, under Mahomet Ali, it had been subjected. The views of the government of Bengal went further. They were desirous of obtaining the cession of the whole of the Nabob's territories. Thus far the object of the two governments differed only as to degree. But Lord Hobart was disposed to employ some degree of force to effect his object, while the government of Bengal were determined to carry it by negotiation, or not at all. The details of the dispute would now possess little interest. It may suffice to say, that the Nabob resolutely refused to comply, and compliance was not enforced. The prevailing abuses, therefore, not only continued but increased. It was indeed impossible for such a system to be stationary. If not abolished, it would inevitably grow and extend itself. Every form of rapine and extortion, every device by which usury could heap interest upon interest, every cruelty by which avarice could realize its golden hopes was practised, till the wretched inhabitants might almost have rejoiced in the irruption of a powerful enemy, and hailed as a deliverer any in-

CHAP. XIV. vader who would have relieved them from the weak, perfidious, and profligate government by which they were borne down. The Nabob asserted that he was unable to yield that which the British government demanded—that the host of natives and Europeans who benefited by the continuance of abuse were too strong for him. This, it will be obvious, was an idle excuse. Although he could have effected nothing without the aid of the British government, he might with their support have relieved his dominions from their oppressors; but he disliked the mode by which relief was to be obtained, and would not purchase protection for his subjects at the cost of gratifying the British government, which he hated. It was natural, indeed, that he should be reluctant to dispossess himself of power; but sovereignty in his hands was but a name—power he had none. The usurers of Madras were masters alike of him and his subjects, and heavily did the yoke press both on prince and people.

The same year which produced this abortive attempt to rescue some of the most valuable districts of the Carnatic from the ruthless grasp of those by whom they were desolated was signalized by the reduction of the Dutch settlements in India and the Indian seas—Ceylon, Malacca, Banda, Amboyna, Cochin. All except the last yielded after very slight resistance.

It has been seen that the policy of Sir John Shore was essentially quiescent. But besides the attack of the Dutch settlements, the necessity for

which was imposed upon the Indian government by the alliance of Holland with the revolutionary rulers of France, two events occurred in the northern parts of India which compelled the governor-general to depart from his ordinary plan of suffering affairs to take their own course. The first of them was the death of Fyzoolla Khan, the persevering Rohilla chief, whose resistance had wearied the Vizier into the confirmation of his jaghire, but whom Hastings engaged in concert with that prince to dispossess of his territories, although it subsequently appeared that he had no intention of carrying his engagement into effect.* Mahomed Ali, the eldest son of Fyzoolla Khan, claimed to succeed his father, and his claim was enforced by the Vizier, as well as recognized by the principal persons in the province. His younger brother, Gholam Mahomed, however, an ambitious and unprincipled man, raised a rebellion, made Mahomed Ali prisoner, and after a time murdered him. On these events becoming known to the governor-general, he felt, as might have been expected, that the honour of the British government required the intervention of their arms to suppress the rebellion raised by Gholam Mahomed, and avenge the treacherous murder of his brother. But the just indignation of Sir John Shore took a turn which, with reference to his mild and amiable character, was truly wonderful. He determined to punish, not only the usurper, but the entire family which the culprit had disgraced and injured—the innocent

* See page 319, et seq.

CHAP. XIV. with the guilty—by confiscating the jaghire granted to Fyzoolla Khan, and transferring the districts of which it consisted to the direct government of the Vizier. The justice of such a proceeding it would be difficult to vindicate, and it would be not less vain to attempt its defence on the ground of humanity. The dominions administered by Fyzoolla Khan were in a state of prosperity, broadly and strongly contrasting with the condition of the ill-governed and miserable territories of the Vizier, to whose wretched sway the governor-general proposed to commit them. The promptitude of Sir Robert Abercromby, the officer commanding the British force in Oude, prevented the full execution of this notable plan. Before the arrival of instructions from Calcutta, he had marched with part of the army of the Vizier against the rebel chief. A battle was fought, in which the usurper was defeated. The Vizier benefited by the acquisition of considerable treasure; but a jaghire was granted to the infant son of the chief who had been so basely murdered. The rebel fratricide escaped with impunity.

The other event which roused the governor-general to action was connected also with the affairs of
A. D. 1797. Oude. In 1797 the Vizier Azoff-al-Dowlah died. He was succeeded by his reputed son, Vizier Ali, whose title, though impugned by the voice of rumour, was recognized by the British government. The grounds on which this recognition was afforded were the acknowledgment of Vizier Ali as his son by Azoff-al-Dowlah, an acknowledgment corrobo-

rated by various acts and declarations, and believed to be valid according to the Mahometan law; the acquiescence of the begum; and the apparent general consent of the inhabitants of Lucknow. A report hostile to the claims of Vizier Ali had indeed reached the governor-general, and in the same minute from which the above reasons are quoted*—in the same paragraph in which they appeared, and in the very next sentence to that in which they are enunciated, Sir John Shore speaks of its being the "popular belief"† that the birth of Vizier Ali was spurious. It is not easy to reconcile the facts of the popular belief being against his claim, and the governor-general being aware that such was the case, with the apparent general consent of the inhabitants of Lucknow in his favour, alleged in the preceding sentence, in justification of his recognition.

Notwithstanding the force ascribed by the governor-general to the reasons in favour of the claim of Vizier Ali, he was not at ease; and he left Calcutta to proceed to Oude, not, as he says, with any view to an alteration of the succession, but under the impression of a possibility "that the repugnance of the inhabitants of Oude to the title of Vizier Ali might be such as to force upon" him "the further consideration of it." At Cawnpore he was met by the minister of Oude, Hussein Reza Khan; and here, that which had been anticipated occurred.

* Recorded 13th January, 1798.

† In the succeeding paragraph the governor-general refers to it as "the universal belief and assertion."

CHAP. XIV. The consideration of the new Vizier's title was "forced" upon the attention of Sir John Shore, the minister declaring, without reserve, that there was but one opinion on the subject, that opinion being that the reigning prince and all his reputed brothers were spurious; and that Saadut Ali, the brother of the deceased Vizier, was the lawful successor to the musnud.

The minister, who had been instrumental in elevating Vizier Ali to a place which he now affirmed belonged to another, endeavoured to excuse his conduct by reference to the same circumstances which the governor-general pleaded in justification of his own. Saadut Ali, according to the report of this functionary, had but few hearty supporters, his extreme parsimony having rendered him unpopular, while the profuseness of Vizier Ali had conciliated the soldiery, who were far more readily influenced by the liberal dispensation of pay and gratuities than by any regard to the lawful claims of inheritance. Other information corroborated the report of the minister as to the Vizier Ali's want of title, and the governor-general resolved to prosecute inquiry, as far as was practicable without exciting suspicion, as to the birth of the reigning Vizier, and his brothers or reputed brothers, as well as into the popular belief on the subject. The result of his investigation as to the former point went to establish the following facts:—that the deceased prince was the father of two sons only, both of whom had died in infancy;—that he had been in the habit of pur-

chasing children and their mothers, and that the children thus acquired were, in various instances, acknowledged by him, and brought up as his own; —that the mother of the reigning prince was a menial servant of the lowest description, employed in the house of one of the Vizier's officers, at the monthly wages of four rupees;—that she was the parent of three sons, of whom the eldest was purchased by the Vizier for five hundred rupees, and received the name of Mahomed Ameer; the second, less fortunate, became a menial servant; while the third shared, and even surpassed, the good fortune of his elder brother, being in like manner purchased by Azoff-al-Dowlah for five hundred rupees, endowed with the name of Vizier Ali, acknowledged by the prince as his son, and heir to his dignity, and finally raised to the throne. It appeared that the younger begum, the wife of Azoff-al-Dowlah, had invariably refused to see Vizier Ali; —that having been requested by the Vizier to honour the nuptials of his heir, by allowing him to be introduced to her on the occasion, she had declined with civility; but at the same time declared to the officer who delivered the message, that she would not disgrace the dignity of her family by admitting such a person as Vizier Ali into her presence. All circumstances seem to have combined to discredit the claim of Vizier Ali except one — the elder begum, the mother of the deceased prince, supported the person thus denounced as an unjust pretender to the throne. This, however, cannot be re-

CHAP. XIV. garded as conclusive, or even strong evidence in his favour. In the impure atmosphere of an eastern court, regard to family honour is often sacrificed to personal motives.

The effect produced on the mind of the governor-general by the evidence which he was able to collect, is thus stated by himself:—"The result of the whole, in my opinion, is this,—that Vizier Ali, and all the reputed sons of the deceased Nabob, are undoubtedly spurious. The impressions which I received on this subject since my inquiries commenced are very different from those which I entertained in Calcutta. The parentage of Vizier Ali, as many of the persons to whom I have appealed observe, is not considered as any matter of delicacy in Lucknow. A supposition that he is the son of Azoff-al-Dowlah would have been treated with ridicule excepting by the partizans of the Nabob (Vizier Ali), or those who benefit by his follies and extravagance; and I could add many anecdotes to prove that Vizier Ali has often, previous to the death of Azoff-al-Dowlah, been reproached as the son of a Fraush, and that the Nabob frequently alluded to his base origin. His elevation to the musnud was a matter of surprise to persons of all ranks, and was even spoken of with contempt by the native troops at Cawnpore." After adverting to certain motives for declining to enter into the investigation at an earlier period, Sir John Shore continues:—"Feeling in all its force the impression of the popular belief of the spurious birth of Vizier Ali, and aware of all the conse-

quences to our political reputation and justice which might result from the acknowledgment of him as the successor of Azoff-al-Dowlah, I still was not authorized to make them the grounds of rejecting him, in opposition to the acknowledgment and declaration of his presumed father; whilst I felt equal repugnance to fix obloquy on the reputation of the deceased Nabob by an inquiry dictated by general rumours only. It is now no longer dubious that the repugnance to the admission of Vizier Ali's succession, after an interval of reflection, was general; that the acknowledgment of it by the Company excited surprise and disappointment; that it was esteemed both disgraceful and unjust, and that nothing but the support of the begum and of the Company would have suppressed the expression of that repugnance. That may now exist in a less degree, but the disgrace attached to our decision still remains. I conclude with repeating, that the prevailing opinion of the spurious birth of Vizier Ali was not a partial rumour originating in enmity or interest at his accession; that it has ever invariably and universally prevailed, in opposition to the acknowledgment of him as his son by the Nabob, Azoff-al-Dowlah, which never obtained credit with a single human being; and that the truth of it is now established by the clear, positive, and circumstantial evidence of Zehseen Ali Khan,* which carries with it the fullest conviction of its truth, as well from his character as from his situation, which

* The person in whose house the mother of Vizier Ali was a menial, and where he was born.

CHAP. XIV. enabled him, and him only, to have a personal knowledge of the circumstances which he has detailed. In his house Vizier Ali was born, and he paid the purchase-money for him to his mother. That evidence so clear was to be obtained was not indeed within the probability of expectation."*

Few unbiassed persons, after an examination of the evidence, will arrive at a conclusion different from that of the governor-general; yet it cannot but excite surprise that, with a resident at the court of Lucknow whose duty it was to watch and to report to the government which he represented every thing of the slightest public importance, the general disbelief of the claim of the recognized son of the sovereign to the inheritance for which he was destined should have been either unknown or disregarded by the British government. The latter, however, appears to have been the fact. Before the death of Azoff-al-Dowlah, the witness, on whose evidence Sir John Shore relied and acted, had communicated to the resident, part at least, of the facts which he afterwards opened more fully to the governor-general. Strange does it appear that they excited no greater degree of attention—that no particular investigation of them then took place—that all inquiry into the conflicting claims of candidates for the succession was postponed till it was necessary to decide at once between them; when, as was certainly far from improbable, the question was improperly determined. It argues little for the activity of the resident, or of the governor-general,

* Minute, 13th January, 1798.

that such should have been the fact. One or both must have deserved great blame. The most probable solution of the difficulty is, that Sir John Shore's almost invincible habit of leaving affairs to settle themselves led him to acquiesce in the recognition of a title which he could not but feel to be questionable, and this view is not inconsistent with his own language. The consideration of the question was at length, as he says, forced upon him; he took it up upon compulsion, but he investigated it with an earnest desire to discover the truth, and his decision was a sound and an honest one.

The elder begum, though she had supported Vizier Ali, had given offence by dissuading him from certain acts of indecorum and extravagance: and in return for the good advice expended on him, the Vizier recommended her withdrawal to Fyzabad. The English government, however, had found it expedient to intimate to the begum that her interference in public affairs might be dispensed with; and this communication tended to allay her resentment towards the Vizier and turn it on the English. Her chief adviser was a rich and powerful frequenter of the court of Lucknow, named Almas, who had long been regarded as a determined enemy to the influence of the British government. Almas, however, suddenly sought an interview with the native minister, whose communications had led to the inquiries instituted by Sir John Shore, and fell in with what he was satisfied was the course of the prevailing current, by making heavy complaints of

CHAP. XIV. Vizier Ali, whom he designated in terms the most opprobrious. He spoke of the baseness of the Vizier's birth, and the profligacy of his character; declared that the begum entirely disapproved of his conduct, and that it was the earnest wish, both of her and himself, that the reigning prince should be deposed, and his place supplied by one of two brothers of the late sovereign, whom he named, to the exclusion not only of all the reputed sons of Azoff-al-Dowlah, but *also of Saadut Ali, the undoubted heir to the throne, if the children of the late Vizier were spurious.* The minister recommended *him to* open his views to the governor-general, and to him he held language similar to that which he had previously employed. He subsequently repeated it in the presence of the officer in command of the British force in Oude; and these communications were important in preparing the way for that which was to follow, as they enabled the English authorities to obtain a distinct admission of Vizier Ali's defective title from the party most likely to defend it, in opposition to that of the rightful claimant. *True it* was that the begum and Almas supported other candidates, and not Saadut Ali, but the claim of Vizier Ali was abandoned by all capable of rendering efficient aid in upholding it. The strange succession of intrigues which had followed the death of Azoff-al-Dowlah are thus recounted by Sir John Shore:—"The preceding detail furnishes a history which has been rarely paralleled. Vizier Ali, without any title in the public estimation, was elevated to the

musnud by the selection of the begum, and act of the resident and minister. He was confirmed upon it by the acknowledgment of his title by the Company, and their declaration to support it. Without that acknowledgment and support he would have been opposed by Almas, whose influence over the begum would have gained her consent to his deposition. The declarations of Almas on his departure from Lucknow were equivalent to a renunciation of allegiance to the Vizier Ali, and his measures were so suspicious as to excite general alarm. Vizier Ali immediately began to act in opposition to the influence and interests of the Company, and the interference of the begum in the administration of affairs produced disorder. The begum and Vizier Ali were not then united. She censured and condemned his conduct; he felt sore under her control, and urged her departure to Fyzabad. An intimation to the begum to withdraw her interference united them, and under their union the most violent and insulting measures to the Company were adopted. The begum, from whatever motives, now disclaims Vizier Ali, as illegitimate* and unqualified; and proposed to depose the person of her choice, and transfer the succession to the sons of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah. The proposition is brought forward by Almas, who joins in it." This extraordinary succession of incidents gives occasion to a very character-

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* This is not strictly correct: it was not alleged that Vizier Ali was illegitimate. It was denied that he was the son of Azoff-al-Dowlah at all.

CHAP. XIV. istic remark on the part of the governor-general: "If," says he, "the interests of the Company and humanity, the reputation of the Company for honour and justice, did not oppose the measure, my own feelings would have induced me to withdraw from a scene of so much embarrassment." He could not withdraw, but his mind appears to have been greatly divided as to the course which he should take. He seriously entertained the thought of continuing Vizier Ali on the throne, and endeavouring to control him through the begum. As a temptation to adopt this course, the begum had offered to make an addition to the annual subsidy. Such a plan would have given to her and her ally, Almas, all that they wished; but no one can believe that it would have been beneficial to the interests of the British government. Another mode which occurred to the mind of the governor-general was, to place the administration of the affairs of Oude directly under the control of the Company's government. But this, he observed could only continue during the minority of Vizier Ali (who was seventeen years of age), and he deemed such a plan open to weighty objections. With much hesitation, he chose the right course; and as his conduct was the result of deep and anxious consideration, the reasoning by which he was finally determined is deserving of notice. "The preceding statement of facts and information," said he, "suggested questions of very serious embarrassment. The course of my investigation into the birth of Vizier Ali had weakened or subverted all the grounds upon which our

acknowledgment of his title had been made: the acknowledgment of him as his son by the late Nabob—his birth in the harem*—the force of the Mahometan law in favour of that acknowledgment—the apparent satisfaction of the inhabitants at Lucknow at his elevation, and the decision of the elder begum in his favour. It proved, that if the succession to the musnud of Oude had been suspended during the first interval of surprise and confusion attending the sudden death of the Nabob Azoff-al-Dowlah, and if an appeal had been made to the unbiassed voice of the people as a jury, their verdict would have pronounced Vizier Ali, and all the sons of the late Nabob, spurious—destitute of any title to the musnud; and that the sons of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah had an undeniable right to it. The evidence of Zehseen established to my entire conviction the justice and truth of the public sentiment; and I had the mortification to learn that the reputation of the Company had suffered by an act which, in the opinion of all reputable people, had been no less disgraceful than unjust. It was impossible to silence these impressions by arguing that the government had not directly interfered in deciding upon the succession, since, in the opinion of all, Vizier Ali's elevation was considered an act of the English government; and it is certain that, without their acknowledgment and support, he could not have maintained his situa-

* Sir John Shore should have said his alleged birth in the harem. Vizier Ali was not born in the harem, but in the house of Zehseen Ali Khan.

CHAP. XIV. tion. On the other hand, it might be argued, that the state of the case was now altered; that the Nabob having been acknowledged, and that acknowledgment confirmed, the question was no longer open to decision; that the discredit of the act had been incurred, and that the reputation of the Company would not now be restored by an act which, in the first instance, would have promoted it; that the public were in some degree reconciled to the succession of Vizier Ali, who had gained many partizans."

The objection above noticed is combated by the governor-general, after reference to precedent, by arguing, "that our acknowledgment of Vizier Ali in the first instance had been extorted by the urgency of the case, and that the more deliberate confirmation of it was made upon presumption which could not be set aside upon the evidence or information before us;—that the public sense of Vizier Ali's want of all title to the musnud had undergone no revolution, nor ever could;—that there is not a man living who ever believed him to be the son of Azoff-al-Dowlah, or to have a shadow of right to the musnud; on the contrary, that in Lucknow he is generally known to be the son of a Fraush; and if his future character should prove as abandoned as it promises to be, the disgrace attending his elevation to the musnud would be perpetuated;—that although many were now reconciled to his title from various motives—the support of the Company, his liberality, influence, interest, or indifference—that men of the most respectability, who were not biassed by such

motives, had not changed their sentiments upon it." The governor-general thus continues:—"The investiture of Vizier Ali, in the words of Abdul Lateef, was doubtless considered by all men of respectability as an act of injustice to the immediate descendants of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah, as the rightful heirs; and no one gave the Company credit for acting from motives of supposed justice, but all ascribed their acknowledgment of Vizier Ali to the political expectation of establishing a more easy and effective influence in Oude than they otherwise could. If so, with a certainty that the sentiments of Abdul Lateef were general, with evidence that they are well founded, the political reputation of the Company can only be restored by the establishment of a family in the musnud which in the universal opinion has an exclusive right to it. Wherever that opinion extends, the justice and reputation of the Company must be affected by confirming the succession of an empire to the son of a Fraush. If Saadut Ali has a right to the musnud, upon what grounds can we defend the denial of it? Whilst the presumption was in favour of Vizier Ali, we determined to maintain his title, not only against Saadut Ali, but against all opposition. That presumption is done away, and the right of Saadut Ali, as the representative of the family of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah, stands undeniable by justice and universal opinion. It may be argued that they are not bound to run the risk of hostilities in support of it; and the argument would be unanswerable if we could withdraw from

CHAP. XIV. all interference in the question, or if our interference did not amount to a denial of his right. The begum and Almas, by their admission that Vizier Ali has no title to the musnud, and by their proposition to invest Mirza Jungly,* on whatever principle it may be founded, have precluded themselves from all right of opposition to the claims of Saadut Ali. I do not mean to assert that they will not oppose his claim against the support of the English; but having admitted the superior right of Shoojah-ad-Dowlah's sons, their opposition to the representative of that family would prove a total dereliction of all regard to right and principle on their parts, and a determination to maintain their own interests against all opposition. On the other hand, as every act of injustice is the parent of more, we must not overlook the future possible consequences of denying that right to Saadut Ali, to which, in the opinion of all, his title stands good. We are so implicated in our connection with Oude, that we cannot withdraw from it, and we are so situated in it, that without a decisive influence in its administration we cannot have any security. The consequences of such a situation might be fatal if the government of the country were secretly hostile to us, and such, in my judgment, would be the situation of the Company under the administration of Vizier Ali, admitting that we could extort from him Allahabad, a pecuniary compensation, and an annual addition to the subsidy; he must be put under restrictions, the begum must

* A younger brother of Saadut Ali.

be compelled to relinquish all interference in the administration, and the power of Almas must be reduced; without this, which would be equivalent to taking the administration of government into our own hands, all attempts to improve the administration of the country and render the situation of the Company secure would be fruitless." After adverting to the difficulty of finding proper instruments for effecting this, the governor-general adds:—"The restrictions which must be imposed upon Vizier Ali would never be borne by him, but under a secret determination to embrace the first opportunity of shaking them off."

The above remarks contain much that admits of far wider application than the events which called them forth, and it is principally for this reason that they have been quoted at length. They contain an unanswerable justification of the course which the governor-general ultimately determined to pursue—granting the facts on which it was based, which indeed scarcely admitted of doubt. It is only to be lamented that these facts were not ascertained at an earlier period. After the series of arguments which have been quoted, Sir John Shore briefly adverted to some personal objections to his acting against Vizier Ali, grounded on their being on apparently amicable terms, and on the governor-general's dislike to all deception. It is impossible not to be struck with the delicacy of sentiment which these objections display, and equally impossible not to admire the determination with which they were van-

CHAP. XIV. quished by a sense of public duty. All the feelings and inclinations of Sir John Shore, but this one, disposed him to acquiesce in the existing state of things, but he did not yield to their influence. Saadut Ali was restored to his right through the agency of the British government, and the usurper compelled to withdraw to a private station, with an allowance for his support, proportioned, not to his natural place among men, but to that which he had for a time so strangely occupied. By the treaty which determined the relations of the new Vizier and the English, the annual subsidy was fixed at seventy-six lacs, and the fort of Allahabad surrendered to the latter power. The English force in Oude was to be ordinarily kept up to ten thousand, and if it at any time exceeded thirteen thousand, the Vizier was to pay for the number in excess; while, if it were allowed to fall below eight thousand, a proportionate deduction was to be made. Twelve lacs were to be paid to the English as compensation for the expense of placing Saadut Ali on the throne, and he was restrained from holding communication with any foreign state, employing any Europeans, or permitting any to settle in his dominions without the consent of his British ally.

Sir John Shore's administration presents nothing further for report. He was elevated to an Irish peerage by the title of Lord Teignmouth, and A. D. 1798. quitted India in March, 1798.

END OF VOLUME II.

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